

THE PRACTICE OF DHARMA REFLECTION AMONG BUDDHIST CHAPLAINS: A
QUALITATIVE STUDY OF 'THEOLOGICAL' ACTIVITY AMONG NONTHEOCENTRIC
SPIRITUAL CAREGIVERS

A Professional Project

presented to

the Faculty of

Claremont School of Theology

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Monica Sanford

May 2018



This dissertation completed by

MONICA SANFORD

has been presented to and accepted by the
faculty of Claremont School of Theology in
partial fulfillment of the requirements of the

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Faculty Committee

Dr. Duane Bidwell, Chairperson

Dr. K. Samuel Lee

Dr. Victor Gabriel

Dean of the Faculty

Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook

May 2018

Abstract

This dissertation is a qualitative study of reflection practices among Buddhist chaplains and chaplain interns using grounded theory methods. This study describes and interprets the existing reflexive practices of Buddhist chaplains to understand their methods and origins and to generate an interpretive theory about the nature and role of Dharma (*Dhamma*) reflection in spiritual care as practiced by Buddhists. This dissertation explores why there is no existing literature on this topic to date and why literature on Buddhist chaplaincy and spiritual care is limited. It also explores the benefits and limitations of Christian literature and other religious traditions in relation to Buddhists and considers some issues related to comparative theology. I then summarize the constructivist grounded theory methods I used in this research. Grounded theory methods generated a theoretical framework for reflection among Buddhist chaplains known as the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Spiritual Reflection. The Framework is comprised of wisdom derived from three tasks—listening (*śrutamayīprajñā*), contemplating (*cintāmayīprajñā*), and practicing (*bhāvanāmayīprajñā*)—carried out through four overlapping stages—self, student, spiritual caregiver, and spiritual friend (*kalyāṇamitra*). The thesis is that Buddhist chaplains who have sufficient experience developing wisdom through these tasks—listening, contemplating, and practicing—in relation to their own spiritual/religious lives; who have been guided and accompanied as students in these tasks by mentors, teachers, and spiritual friends (*kalyāṇamitra*); and who can apply them to their own work as spiritual caregivers, are then better able to accompany and guide careseekers as spiritual friends (*kalyāṇamitra*) using this framework. The Framework accomplishes many of the outcomes of “facilitating theological reflection in the context of pastoral care” among Buddhist chaplains, yet is distinct from the Christian understanding of theological reflection. It is not a Buddhist substitute for theological reflection, but rather a method of learning and reflection fully explicated within a Dharmic worldview.

Finally, this proposal explores the limitations and potential benefits of this work. This dissertation serves as a foundation for developing distinctly Buddhist methods for reflection in spiritual care and contributes to a growing field of literature analogous to pastoral theology for Christians.

Dedication

To Dr. Kenneth Locke. You know what you did.

To all chaplains. Keep doing what you do.

Acknowledgements

I bow down in gratitude to the Buddha and the *bodhisattvas* who have inspired this work. I bow down in gratitude to my ancestors and parents, who have gifted me with a strong mind and body capable of this work. I bow down to my friends, family, and partner, Colin, who have supported and encouraged me throughout this work. I bow down to my teachers, particularly Dr. Duane Bidwell, Dr. Samuel Lee, Rev. Dr. Victor Gabriel, Dr. Kathleen Greider, Rev. Dr. Jitsujo Gauthier, and Rabbi Rochelle Robins, who have guided me throughout my studies. I bow down to my kind transcriptionists, coders, and editors, without whom I would never have completed this work on time. I bow down to my understanding boss and coworkers, who have always encouraged me and supported flexibility in my work. I bow down to the anonymous Buddhist chaplains who participated in the research and shared their wisdom out of the goodness of their hearts. I have stolen your best ideas. This work is not possible without you. And I bow down to all the future Buddhist chaplains who will do good work for the sake of the world. By the merit of this undertaking may all beings be liberated from suffering and may they find unconditional happiness. *Sadhu, sadhu, sadhu.*

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
The Three <i>Prajñās</i> Framework for Reflection in Brief	12
Summary of Chapters	16
Terms & Definitions	20
Conclusion	24
Chapter 2: Literature Review	29
Buddhist Chaplaincy	31
‘Theological’ Reflection	59
Comparative ‘Theology’	80
Conclusion	88
Chapter 3: Methods	90
Practical Theology	92
Constructivist Grounded Theory	103
Methods	110
Conclusion	135
Chapter 4: Findings	139
Research Questions	140
Development of Themes	151
Investigation of Significant Concepts	163
Hypotheses	189
Conclusion	209
Chapter 5: Framework	213
Emergence of the Framework	215
Literature Review of the Three <i>Prajñās</i>	221
The Three <i>Prajñās</i> Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care	247
Validating the Framework	273
Conclusion	291
Chapter 6: Discussion	295
Conversation	298
Limitations	324
Implications & Applications	329
Conclusion	338
Bibliography	341

Appendices.....	357
Appendix A: Code List & Descriptions.....	357
Appendix B: Information Sheet & Informed Consent.....	385
Appendix C: Data Collection & Analysis Timeline	390
Appendix D: Interview & Follow-Up Interview Questions	391
Appendix E: Evidence of Data Saturation & Sufficiency	404
Appendix F: First Draft Sketch of Three <i>Prajñās</i> Theory.....	407

Chapter 1: Introduction

During my first unit of clinical pastoral education (CPE), my supervisor, a Reform rabbi, asked, “How are you going to empathize with patients who have a strong relationship with God?” I did not have an answer for her at the time. Honestly, I did not know how I was going to work with any careseeker yet, let alone one who, unlike me, had faith in a monotheistic creator deity at work in their life. I was familiar with the concept, having been raised, educated, and confirmed in the United Methodist Church. I left the church at the age of fifteen due to my lack of personal experience with or belief in the God they worshipped every week. I came to Buddhism later, at the age of twenty-two, and chose it as my spiritual—and then professional—path. I walked that path for more than a decade before finding myself in my first unit of CPE, facing my supervisor’s question. Through our conversations, it became clear that she wanted me to consider how or if I would be able to empathize with patients whose religious experiences and beliefs were different from my own. It seemed that the starkest of these differences had to do with belief in and experience of God. I made it one of my learning goals for that unit: I would find a way to empathize with people who believed in God and saw God at work in their lives.

Five years later, I still have not fully succeeded in empathizing with those who have a strong relationship with God. However, I no longer worry about it the way I used to. My interpretation of the rabbi’s probing question was perhaps a bit misguided or a shade too literal. Through four units of CPE and nearly five years of campus chaplaincy to date, I have found plenty of common ground with the students and staff members for whom I provide spiritual care, regardless of religious or spiritual worldview. In fact, I have found that one of the strongest bases for empathy is the shared feeling of seeking connection with something beyond our narrow senses of self, regardless of what that something turns out to be, whether it’s another person, a

family, a culture or profession, a sacred unity, an interdependent cosmos, the interchangeability of matter and energy, gods, God, or the personification of God in Jesus Christ. Seeking knowledge, meaning, understanding, and connection—these things are endemic to the human condition irrespective of the box we tick on a demographic form. This hearkens back to Clyde Kluckhohn and Henry Murray’s observation (echoed by Emmanuel Lartey¹) that all people, both individuals and members of distinct groups, are in some respects like all others.²

I reflect on this experience now in relation to what I have learned from thirteen other Buddhist chaplains practicing spiritual care with interfaith careseekers all over North America. Like me, they were largely isolated in their CPE cohorts, the only Buddhist and, occasionally, one of a distinct minority (see chapter three for demographic statistics on the participants in this study).

The question of ‘God’ is a thorny one and prevalent among Buddhist chaplains, who engage in a profession invented by Christians for Christians. Only recently has chaplaincy expanded to other religions, starting with other Abrahamic traditions who share a belief in a monotheistic creator God. Even Hindu, Pagan, and Wiccan chaplains have some sense of theistic or deistic belief as the basis of their spirituality. Buddhists and Humanists are the two notable groups that have taken up this work without such reliance on a deity, though Buddhists are by no means atheists (I cannot speak for Humanists). In essence, Buddhism as a religious, philosophical, and psychological system simply does not rely on the intervention of a benevolent creator to the same degree as other religions, even when intercessory power is invoked. At best,

¹ Emmanuel Yartekwei Lartey, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2003), 34.

² Clyde Kluckhohn and Henry A. Murray, ed., *Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Knopf, 1953), 54-59.

Buddhism can be described as a nontheocentric religion. To many Buddhists, God/gods is simply beside the point, which is to achieve liberation from suffering through moral behavior, the purification of the mind, and cultivation of wisdom and compassion. During my CPE work, it became critically important for me to hold this in mind and develop skillful ways to explicate it to my theocentric peers and supervisor.

In many ways, I was reflecting on the relationship between Buddhism and spiritual care in a vacuum, with an almost complete lack of literature or guidance on the topic. I began my graduate education to receive a Master of Divinity degree in Buddhist Chaplaincy in 2010, prior to the publication of any of the three books that now exist on Buddhist chaplaincy. At the time, only a few brief articles and chapters that reflected on the relationship between Buddhism and spiritual care had been published by Buddhist chaplains. Moreover, their authors tended to reflect from viewpoints I did not necessarily share, as Buddhism contains as wide and varied a set of traditions as Christianity. A chapter by a Buddhist chaplain of the Zen Peacemaker order made sense in certain respects, but not in others. Another by a Tibetan adherent resonated on some levels, but lost me when it came to tantra and the *Vajrayāna* teachings of Tibetan Buddhism. It is also worth noting that both of these were written by white American males. (These chapters and other literature are summarized below in the literature review.) My classmates and I were mostly left to our devices to make sense of this path we had chosen, though we were supported and encouraged by various teachers, mentors, supervisors, and, crucially, one another.

When I arrived at CPE, I felt that my caregiving skills, such as active listening, responding and reflecting, working with a pragmatic psychology, knowing when to refer, and holding space for compassion and setting personal boundaries, were well formed, but my ability

to describe what I was doing, why I was doing it, and what it all meant seemed somewhat underdeveloped. Christians have a whole genre of literature on this subject called “pastoral theology.” My Jewish peers could similarly cite chapter and verse of Torah, Talmud, and academic literature and relate it to a conversation with a careseeker—who was also likely theocentric—to reflect on the meaning of the encounter in light of both the careseeker’s religious/spiritual tradition and their own. My own ability to reflect was not so sophisticated, despite the numerous “reflection papers” I had submitted throughout graduate school. Fortunately for both my own meaning-making processes and my ability to facilitate such reflection for struggling and confused careseekers at critical periods in their lives, this developed rapidly. By the end of my fourth unit, constructing and sharing such reflections with others and facilitating reflection among careseekers and peers was one of my strongest aspects of my work as a chaplain—even though I still had not answered my supervisor’s question. (In fact, I never learned how to empathize with the feeling of being connected to God because it is not a feeling I have ever experienced, but this is a different topic.)

In the standards of professional practice, this kind of articulated thought is referred to as the ability to “facilitate theological reflection in the practice of pastoral care.”³ Buddhist chaplains have continually stumbled over that word—‘theological’—in our work. Opinions range

³ Board of Chaplaincy Certification, Inc. “Common Qualifications and Competencies for Professional Chaplains,” Board of Chaplaincy Certification, Inc. an affiliate of the Association of Professional Chaplains. (Hoffman Estates, IL: Association of Professional Chaplains, 2017), 2, [http://www.professionalchaplains.org/files/2017%20Common%20Qualifications%20and%20Competencies%20for%20Professional %20Chaplains.pdf](http://www.professionalchaplains.org/files/2017%20Common%20Qualifications%20and%20Competencies%20for%20Professional%20Chaplains.pdf).

from fully embracing the term in its broadest meaning⁴ to calling for banning its application in relation to Buddhism⁵ because it functions as a form of academic colonialism.

Since Buddhist chaplains (and chaplain interns) struggle with the practice of ‘theological’ reflection due to its Christian overtones, I have bracketed (‘’) the term ‘theological’ throughout this work to emphasize that it is not universally applicable to forms of Buddhist reflection. Elsewhere, I have suggested that Buddhists could adopt the term ‘theology,’ despite the troubling root of ‘theo’⁶ meaning God/gods. However, I must admit that I am still wrestling with this idea and remain concerned about the dangers of linguistic colonialism. What theology is, does, and means in English may not accurately describe the scholarly or intellectual practices of Buddhists.

I now believe we cannot use the term, not even in a general sense or as a placeholder due a “family resemblance”⁷ effect between Christian and Buddhist intellectual endeavors without, at least subconsciously, connoting at least some of its Christian ontological and epistemological meanings. Unfortunately, I have no better alternative to offer yet. Therefore, the single quotes (‘’) suggest we take this term lightly in this discussion and consider possible alternatives when more members of the Buddhist community have shared their wisdom.⁸ Regardless of how one

⁴ John Makransky, “Contemporary Academic Buddhist Theology: Its Emergence and Rationale,” in *Buddhist Theology: Critical Reflections by Contemporary Buddhist Scholars*, ed. Roger Jackson and John Makransky (London: Routledge, 2000), 15-16.

⁵ Richard Payne, “Why ‘Buddhist Theology’ is Not a Good Idea: Keynote Address for the Fifteenth Biennial Conference of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies, Kyoto, August 2011,” *The Pure Land* 27 (2012-2013): 37-38.

⁶ Monica Sanford, “Buddhist Practical Theology,” in *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, ed. Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher (Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016), 56-57.

⁷ For more on this topic, see Anat Biletzki and Anat Matar “Ludwig Wittgenstein,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Fall 2016 Edition*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/wittgenstein/>, under “Language Games and Family Resemblance.”

⁸ For a more thorough consideration of these pitfalls than I have time for here, please see Payne, “Why ‘Buddhist Theology’ is Not a Good Idea.”

feels about the terms ‘theological’ or ‘theology,’ the fact remains that Christian chaplains have defined the methods and written the contemporary literature on how to perform ‘theological’ reflection themselves and facilitate it for careseekers. Buddhist chaplains have no such materials. How then can we meet this standard for professional practice, which is applied to every chaplain, irrespective of tradition? Is such a standard even appropriate? (See chapter six for more on this question.)

My preliminary investigation of this topic led me to believe that Buddhist chaplains do, in fact, perform something at least analogous to ‘theological’ reflection for themselves and facilitate it for others. During the course of my PhD qualifying exams, I re-read both *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, one of the first books on Buddhist chaplaincy by Buddhist chaplains,⁹ and *Theological Reflection: Methods* by Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward.¹⁰ Though I had not intended to compare these works, the methods Graham, Walton, and Ward described also appeared in patterns of thought and explication by several authors in *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, as I explore further below. This was sufficient for a hypothesis that Buddhist chaplains do indeed perform and facilitate ‘theological’ reflection that is in some ways similar to, yet also distinct from, Christian methods. However, having been isolated from other Buddhist chaplains during my CPE work, I could not validate my hypothesis. Thus, that seed of curiosity has grown into this study. How do Buddhists make meaning from/of/about their work as spiritual caregivers? How do they do ‘theological’ reflection, if at all?

⁹ Cheryl A. Giles and Willa Miller, ed., *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices in Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012).

¹⁰ Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London: SCM Press, 2005).

In my own experience as a Buddhist chaplain, one of the major obstacles in performing ‘theological’ reflection as part of my CPE training is a lack of resources and examples of how *Buddhists* (especially nontheocentric Buddhists) engage in the process of reflection to make meaning from and enrich their practice of spiritual care. Despite my struggle with this process, I have nevertheless found it very important to my work as a chaplain, deeply affecting how I respond to careseekers. Fellow Buddhist chaplains have expressed similar sentiments. Moreover, a cursory analysis¹¹ of the essays in *The Arts of Contemplative Care* reveals that these spiritual care professionals engage in deep and sophisticated reflective practices, despite not calling it ‘theological’ reflection. This study develops this anecdotal experience into a well-grounded interpretive theory based on empirical data to inform the training and formation of Buddhist chaplains and improve the practices of Buddhist chaplaincy.

This descriptive-interpretive study of Buddhist chaplains documents the ways in which they engage in reflection. (Normative and prescriptive work may follow this research, but is not the primary purpose of this work.) Specifically, this research began with the following questions:

1. What ‘theological’ methods or processes are used by Buddhist chaplains and chaplain interns when reflecting on the Dharma in relation to their practice of spiritual care? How are these methods/processes similar to or distinct from methods of theological reflection employed by Christian and other theocentric chaplains?¹²

¹¹ Monica Sanford, “Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist Spiritual Care, Counseling, and Assessment,” (qualifying exam paper, Claremont, CA: Claremont School of Theology, 2017), 17-26.

¹² Note that this is not a comparative study of Buddhist and Christian methods. Rather, the comparison operates as a heuristic to better understand Buddhist methods in their distinctiveness and particularity.

2. What sources of Dharma are used or privileged during the process of reflection?¹³ (i.e. sutras/suttas, books, teachers/teachings, and other sources beyond direct experience)
3. What is the relationship between one's own experience as a chaplain or chaplain intern and one's understanding of the Dharma and how is it articulated?
4. How does the practice of reflection on the Dharma and their own experience change their practice of spiritual care? In other words, what interventions do Buddhist chaplains and chaplain interns develop from their reflective practices and what effects do they have?

For this study, I selected Buddhist chaplains who have completed or are in CPE with interfaith populations. As this is a preliminary study of an emerging field that lacks an existing body of theory, I use constructivist grounded theory methods to collect and analyze the data, seek emergent themes, and develop an interpretive theory for Buddhist reflection that explains the processes by which Buddhist chaplains make meaning from their spiritual care experiences and how those reflective processes affect later spiritual care practice.¹⁴ I document the ways in which Buddhist chaplains engage in reflection, how these practices are similar to and distinct from Christian methods, and how Buddhist chaplains explore the dialectic between the Dharma within their own experience and the Dharma¹⁵ as a received tradition. Finally, I ask participants to explore the role of their reflexive practices on their perceived efficacy as caregivers and their

¹³ Sources are critical to determining how and why Buddhist chaplains interpret a particular event and assign meaning to it. They serve as templates, models, and sources of received meaning from tradition.

¹⁴ Note that this is not a study of outcomes or the efficacy of particular kinds of spiritual care interventions from the perspectives of patients. Rather, the effects I investigate here are primarily the effects on the chaplain and their self-reported feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

¹⁵ Dharma/*dharmma* has a dual connotation as both 'teaching' and 'phenomena.' See "dharma" in *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, ed., Robert E. Buswell, Jr., and Donald S. Lopez, Jr., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 242-243.

ongoing spiritual practice and work. I engage in this work based on my training in practical theology, the branch of theology interested in the actions by which members of a particular religious tradition enact and understand that tradition in their daily lives.¹⁶

The methods of practical theology, especially the development of ‘theological’ insights from lived experience, are useful in the study of Buddhism, as Buddhists already engage in this type of reflection, based on teachings native to the Dharma. I note in “Buddhist Practical Theology”:

The simplest possible practical theological framework is that of action-reflection-action. One does something, observes, reflects upon the outcomes, and adjusts one’s actions accordingly. In the *Sona Sutta* (AN6.55) the Buddha likens practice to the strings of a musical instrument, a vina, asking if the instrument was playable if the strings were too tight or too loose.¹⁷ Just as a musician tunes his instrument by tightening a string, listening for the sound, then loosening it again, we employ action-reflection-action to bring ourselves more in line with the Dharma. In the case of certain forms of meditation, this framework may be inverted and described as reflection-action-reflection, but the basic formula remains and can be applied on a moment-to-moment daily basis.¹⁸

Many of the participants in this study actively cited the action-reflection model of learning as integral to their practice of reflection and growth as chaplains, as described in chapter four, and some even critiqued it, as described in chapter five.

This research applies a modified version of Richard Osmer’s four-part framework for pastoral theology,¹⁹ which, as I have explored in “Buddhist Practical Theology,” closely matches

¹⁶ This definition is loosely based on Bonnie Miller-McLemore, “Practical Theology,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*, vol. 3, Charles Lippy and Peter Williams, ed., (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2010), 1741-2.

¹⁷ “Sona Sutta: About Sona” (AN 6.66), trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu [from the Pāli], *Access to Insight (Legacy Edition)*, last modified November 30, 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an06/an06.055.than.html>.

¹⁸ Monica Sanford, “Buddhist Practical Theology,” 57.

¹⁹ Richard Robert Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2011).

the Buddhist framework for the Four Noble Truths.²⁰ The First Noble Truth is descriptive (the experiences of suffering), the Second is interpretive (the causes of suffering), the Third is normative (suffering can/should end), and the Fourth is pragmatic (the way to end suffering). These four tasks—descriptive, interpretive, normative, and pragmatic—make up Osmer’s framework for practical theology. While Osmer applies this framework to specific tasks, such as deciding how to place a new playground at their local church, the Buddha applies it to a generalized phenomenon: suffering. I find that the framework is flexible enough to be used in both specific cases to seek solutions to particular problems and also to generalized questions to develop theories and frameworks for action in multiple scenarios. Due to this alignment between each of Osmer’s four tasks²¹ and the Four Truths, I find the framework suitable for application in a Buddhist context, despite its Christian explication.²² I provide an example from my own experience as a chaplain in “Buddhist Practical Theology,” demonstrating how each task operates in the process of providing spiritual care.

²⁰ Sanford, “Buddhist Practical Theology,” 60-62.

²¹ Osmer’s tasks are not as neat and linear as they are presented. Just to describe something, we must interpret what we are seeing. To interpret something, we must make judgments about it. Even the focus of our attention can be driven by whether or not we believe there is a pragmatic response to an issue before we start the investigation process. Something that seems unworkable may be ignored in favor of easier, but less important, issues. In this way, each task is present within each other task. Normativity, in particular, tends to start much earlier than the third step. It is embedded in the way we describe the problem (and even if we describe it as a “problem” at all) or issue, the ways we interpret it, the choices we make for interpretive lenses and theories, and in the pragmatic solutions we pursue. Our task as scholars and theologians is not to avoid normativity, but to surface as many of our unspoken normative assumptions and biases as possible and assign them their proper significance. We shall see this tendency towards pervasive normativity in the Framework that emerges from this research. It shall be acknowledged in chapter five and explored in the section on “Normative Paradoxes” in chapter six.

²² Ibid., 56.

In this study, I focus on only the first two of Osmer's four tasks, or the first two of the Four Noble Truths (though I do not claim my insights are comparable to the Buddha's wisdom). The descriptive/empirical task seeks to understand "What is going on?" when Buddhist chaplains practice reflection. To this aim, I gathered information through interviews and written reflections related to my four research questions (see chapter three). The interpretive task seeks to understand "Why is this going on?" To that end, I inquired about participants' learning process of how to practice and facilitate reflection, as well as their sources and teachers, to understand how and from whom/where they learned to reflect and from whom/where the meanings they assign to various experiences originate.

This study reveals a dynamic process of reflection on the Dharma and its role in Buddhist spiritual care, and it generates an interpretive theory—the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care—that accounts for this process and its outcomes (see chapter five). It is a significant contribution to what we know about how Buddhist chaplains operate in their professional capacities and understand their work, especially given that we tend to operate isolated from one another and surrounded by non-Buddhist peers. This makes research that draws on the collective wisdom of working Buddhist chaplains all the more urgent, so that we may learn from one another.

Osmer's framework (and the Four Noble Truths) continues with two further tasks not included in this study: the normative and pragmatic tasks. The normative task determines, "What ought to be going on?" while the pragmatic task asks, "How might we respond?" This research serves as the groundwork for future studies exploring these tasks in relation to the role of reflection in Buddhist spiritual care and counseling. Such a project requires the participation of a larger segment of the Buddhist community, particularly authoritative Dharma teachers and

spiritual care faculty. Critical questions and concerns to start that conversation can be found in chapter six.

This study will enable further research and dialogue that will be well grounded in empirical data. As hypothesis-generating research, it helps establish a research trajectory (or trajectories) and shapes the nascent field of scholarly work on Buddhist chaplaincy. This literature is urgently needed by Buddhist chaplains already practicing in the profession and by the hundreds who will follow. They will no longer have to predominantly rely, as I did, on Christian literature for their education and training. Moreover, it has the potential to reshape the standards of professional chaplaincy practice to be more inclusive and to better serve the full diversity of both chaplains and careseekers in a religiously plural world that the founders of the profession may not have envisioned. The interpretive theory presented here—the Three *Prajñās* Framework—is, I hope, just one of many that will be improved upon through ongoing literature and dialogue.

The Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Brief

I developed the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care, which consists of listening, contemplating, and practicing, from the data collected from my thirteen participants and supported by evidence from the existing literature, both ancient and contemporary. The Three *Prajñās*, or three wisdoms, exist in all three major branches of Buddhism (Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana). While *prajñā*, or wisdom, is the subject of countless volumes of Buddhist literature, the Three *Prajñās* are a minor concept as a method for learning the Dharma and obtaining wisdom, though they were clearly recognizable to participants in my study, who referenced them both explicitly and implicitly. These casual

references instigated a deeper investigation, resulting in the recognition of an overall pattern within the data (described thoroughly in chapters three, four, and five).

The Three *Prajñās* Framework itself is described fully in chapter five, along with a full review of relevant Buddhist literature. In brief, the Three *Prajñās* are described thus by *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*:

Three specific types of wisdom are set forth, including the wisdom generated by learning (*śrutamayīprajñā*), an intellectual understanding gained through listening to teachings or reading texts; the wisdom generated by reflection (*cintāmayīprajñā*), which includes conceptual insights derived from one's own personal reflection on those teachings and from meditation at a low level of concentration; and the wisdom generated by cultivation (*bhāvanāmayīprajñā*), which is a product of more advanced stages in meditation.²³

Collectively, these three types of wisdom are referred to as listening, contemplating, and practicing.²⁴ They can also be referred to through a compound Sanskrit term, *śruta-cintā-bhāvanāmayīprajñā*. The meanings of the Sanskrit terms and their appearance in both ancient and contemporary Buddhist literature will be further reviewed in chapter five. Data demonstrates that this framework can be broadly applied to the activity of Buddhist chaplains, even among participants who did not explicitly reference the Three *Prajñās*. To what extent each participant was aware of the teachings on the three wisdoms or had absorbed them implicitly, as an underlying structure within the transmission of the Dharma, is not yet known and beyond the scope of this study. This is one major limitation of the work at hand and an area for future research.

Buddhist chaplains are already applying the Three *Prajñās*, either implicitly or explicitly, to the work of spiritual care with interfaith populations. The three tasks of listening,

²³ See “*prajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 655.

²⁴ Or sometimes as hearing, reflecting, and meditating, depending on the translation, which is far from consistent. See chapter five for further discussion.

contemplating, and practicing can be understood as progressing recursively through four stages: self, student, chaplain, and spiritual friend (*kalyāṇamitra*).

At the first stage—self—the participant listens to the Dharma, contemplates it, and practices meditation for the sake of their own spiritual awakening. This may occur when the participant is first learning the Dharma or exploring their spiritual and religious life. This stage is particularly important among those who seriously take up the study of Buddhism later in life.

At the second stage—student—the participant listens to or reads according to a course of study guided by a teacher, mentor, or spiritual friend; engages in structured reflection through dialogue and assignments; and practices with the guidance of a teacher or *sangha*. In the case of Buddhists who were raised in devout Buddhist families or cultures and within a particular tradition/*sangha*, this stage may overlap with and be almost indistinguishable from the first stage. The teacher-student relationship is one of the primary relationships of Buddhism, and it has often been described as a “lineage” tradition, based on how the teachings are transmitted from learned masters to Dharma “heirs.” This is the stage in which the participant has their first opportunity to progress on their path accompanied by spiritual friends, or *kalyāṇamitra*. This will become a crucial concept in the final stage, as the data demonstrated the importance of this role-reversal. Participants who have experienced facilitation from a spiritual friend (e.g., teacher, mentor, guide, or peer) that aided them in listening, contemplating, and practicing were better able to facilitate this process for others later.

In the third stage—chaplain—the participant listens as a spiritual caregiver, contemplates their encounters with careseekers, and practices meaning-making and other caregiver skills in order to develop as a chaplain and better serve careseekers. It is important to note that while the participant is, at this stage, a practicing chaplain or chaplain intern and providing spiritual care is

an integral aspect of “practicing,” the primary concern at this stage is still the participant’s own process of learning *how* to be a chaplain through the acts of spiritual caregiving. To some degree, the third and fourth stages also co-occur, but in the third stage, reflection is primarily performed for the sake of the participants learning from their own encounters with careseekers.

At the fourth stage—spiritual friend (*kalyāṇamitra*)—the Buddhist chaplain facilitates reflection among careseekers through listening to their worldviews, helping them contemplate their beliefs and values in relation to their present circumstances, assessing their spiritual/religious practices to determine what might aid in their ability to cope and grow spiritually, and implementing appropriate spiritual interventions. Here, the primary concern is reflection by, for, and with the careseeker. While the participant does not cease to monitor and reflect on their own practice, it is no longer the primary focus. Rather, they regularly make the spiritual careseeker the center of attention and accompany them as a spiritual friend on their path, wherever it leads. Thus, one listens as self, student, chaplain, and spiritual friend. One contemplates as self, student, chaplain, and spiritual friend. And one practices as self, student, chaplain, and spiritual friend. Though I use the paradigm of the *kalyāṇamitra* for this stage, chapter six discusses the various drawbacks of this model.

These stages are cumulative and recursive, rather than progressive in a linear sense. However, each one must be mastered as a strong foundation for the next. Once mastered, a participant may (and should) return to an earlier stage at any time. Without that mastery, however, it is very difficult to progress to the next stage. In the final stage, a chaplain who facilitates listening, contemplating, and practicing for others as a spiritual friend must continue listening, contemplating, and practicing for the sake of their own spiritual awakening. They need

to continue working with trusted teachers and mentors for ongoing spiritual formation and monitoring their own practice as spiritual caregivers for ongoing supervision and consultation.

Thus we come to the thesis for this work: Buddhist chaplains who have 1) engaged the Three *Prajñās* Framework of listening, contemplating, and practicing in their own spiritual practice for the sake of their own awakening; 2) been guided and facilitated in listening, contemplating, and practicing by other spiritual caregivers such as mentors, teachers, supervisors, and peers; and 3) applied the process of listening, contemplating, and practicing to make sense of their work as chaplains, are better able to facilitate ‘theological’ reflection among careseekers through either implicit or explicit reliance on the Three *Prajñās* Framework to guide their interactions with careseekers in beneficial ways. In short, the more listening-contemplating-practicing one does, especially when accompanied or guided by spiritual friends, the better one can facilitate listening-contemplating-practicing in others as a spiritual friend.

While it should be noted that the Three *Prajñās* Framework accomplishes many of the same outcomes as ‘theological’ reflection (e.g., meaning-making, relating life events to religious teaching, aligning one’s actions with one’s values, etc.), I am not yet ready to conclude that the two are analogous. It would be premature to say that listening-contemplating-practicing is ‘theological’ reflection for Buddhists. In fact, I tend to lean more toward an assertion that this is *not* ‘theological’ reflection. It is something both larger than and distinct from what Christians understand as theological reflection. This topic is explored further in chapters five and six.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter one includes a summary description of the study (above), this chapter summary, terms and definitions to aid readers, and a conclusion that summarizes the relevance of this research to the field. From the outset, this research was significant because it was the first to

collect empirical data from professional Buddhist chaplains in North American interfaith settings. This is unique and rich data because it provides a window on a topic we know little about (or know much, but only anecdotally and in fragments) partially because most Buddhist chaplains tend to be isolated in their work and unable to share theory and practice insights with one another in any significant depth. This study also goes beyond description and into interpretation through the construction of theory or, in this case, the application of a very old theory (the Three *Prajñās*) to a new context. This type of work is rare in the field of Buddhist chaplaincy and has not previously been backed up by qualitative data, as we can see in the literature summarized in chapter two.

Chapter two contains the initial literature review to locate the research within the field. The literature review reveals a lack of literature in this area. Reflective practice by and for Buddhist chaplains currently has no direct literature and only three brief chapters and articles provide even cursory treatment of the topic from related perspectives. On the topic of Buddhist chaplaincy itself, only three books and a handful of chapters, articles, and dissertations or theses have been published. This chapter also reviews Christian literature on ‘theological’ reflection to provide the reader with a context and basis for comparison of the findings. It concludes with an overview of comparative theologies and a consideration of the ethical issues related to crossing back and forth between Buddhist and non-Buddhist worldviews on this topic.

Chapter three outlines the methods used in the study. The Institutional Review Board proposal was approved on April 14, 2017, as exempt from full board review.²⁵ This chapter begins with an overview of the practical theology and grounded theory methods used for this study. It then describes the nature of the participants, including demographics, and why they

²⁵ IRB chair Thomas Phillips, email message to author, April 14, 2017.

were selected for study. Third, it details the methods of data collection and analysis employed. Questions and prompts employed in the interviews are briefly described, with the full text provided in the appendices. Questions for the written reflections are included, with full instructions provided to participants also located in the appendices. Fourth, it lists the codes used to analyze the data and describes the different types of codes and coding passes used to understand and categorize the data. This includes tables describing frequency of codes, code groups, code co-occurrence relationships, and code splitting or recombining. Four coding passes are described: 1) initial and thematic, 2) processes and values, 3) focused and revised, and 4) theoretical. The rationale for choosing which areas to explore further, especially when not exploring the most frequently occurring codes, is described. Finally, this chapter concludes with an overview of the memoing that accompanied the data collection and analysis, foregrounding chapter four, and a description of the role of further literature review in grounded theory studies, foregrounding chapter five.

Chapter four details the findings, including more thorough descriptions of what codes were developed, how they were applied, the identification of the central concern, and the development of the theory that emerged from the data through the memoing process. First, tentative answers to the four research questions are proposed. Second, this chapter uses thick description, quotations from the data, and references to memos created during the analysis process to track and describe the development of the central concern. Third, a narrative emerges, bringing significant themes in the data into dialogue with a) Buddhist literature, b) spiritual care or pastoral theology literature, and c) literature on the practice of ‘theological’ reflection. Fourth, this dialogue generates hypotheses for further research and a tentative theory on the state of Buddhist reflection in spiritual care. Fifth, this chapter then explores who was chosen for follow-

up interviews, what questions and prompts (generated from the data) were employed in the follow-up interviews, and what new codes emerged and existing codes (briefly summarized in chapter three) were refined as a result of the follow-up interviews. Finally, chapter four narrates the development of these hypotheses and the responses to them.

Chapter five first presents the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care, including how it emerged from the data, being initially referenced by the participants. Second, the chapter includes a literature review on the Three *Prajñās* to fully explicate their meaning from scripture, commentary, and modern sources and place them in context with the *Buddhadharma*. Third, it then describes their applicability in relation to Buddhist spiritual care. Fourth, continuing with thick description, this chapter explores the full shape, including the limitations and omissions, of the Framework as it is developed. At this stage, the thesis articulated above is scrutinized and placed into dialogue with relevant literature. Finally, this chapter presents a brief comparison of the how the Framework is similar to and different from Christian methods of theological reflection.

Chapter six outlines the implications, applications, and pathways for future research. First, this chapter explores the gaps in the data and areas where further description and interpretation are necessary. Second, it speculates on potential pathways for the normative and pragmatic tasks of both Osmer's framework and the pattern of the Third and Fourth of the Noble Truths. In other words, how could we go about determining how Buddhist chaplains ought to practice reflection? This, in turn, generates suggestions for new research projects with the goal of developing Buddhist theories or models of reflection, some of which are implicated in the data and existing literature. Likewise, this chapter includes speculation on how we might respond to these normative questions. This includes general suggestions or guidance for Buddhist chaplains,

faculty in Buddhist chaplaincy training programs, and CPE supervisors working with Buddhist chaplain interns. However, these suggestions often result in questions to be asked, rather than answers to be provided. A descriptive interpretation of the ways in which Buddhist chaplains and chaplains-in-training practice Dharma reflection immediately suggests areas to focus on in the practice, education, and training of such spiritual caregivers for chaplains, faculty, and CPE supervisors. Still, the normative task cannot be omitted if we wish to generate sound guidance for future Buddhist chaplains who are well grounded in their respective Dharma traditions. Areas of focus are identified, but the development of pedagogical or spiritual care interventions as a result of this research is premature. Finally, the dissertation concludes with an overview of future research questions.

Terms & Definitions

Throughout this study, I shall regularly refer to the following key terms, as defined below:

Careseeker—The preferred term for a patient, client, or other person seeking/needing spiritual care or counseling from a chaplain.

CPE—Clinical Pastoral Education; it is essentially an internship for spiritual caregivers under the supervision of a CPE supervisor as part of a peer cohort of three-to-nine other chaplain interns, usually completed at a hospital.²⁶

Chaplain—A trained provider of spiritual care working in a nonreligious institutional context (e.g., a hospital, hospice, prison, military, etc.). This includes chaplain interns in the CPE phase

²⁶ For more information, see “Information For Prospective Students: Frequently Asked Questions,” Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, https://www.acpe.edu/ACPE/_Students/FAQ_S.aspx.

of their training. Only chaplains with or working towards a Master of Divinity degree or equivalent (as verified through board certification) were included in this study.

Chaplaincy—Work done by a chaplain or the practice of providing spiritual care to those in distress, typically in an institutional (hospital, hospice, military, college), rather than religious (church, synagogue, temple) setting. It is often interfaith in nature such that the chaplain and care seeker(s) may be of different religious traditions.

Dharma/Dhamma—Sanskrit and Pāli terms, respectively, colloquially translated as “teaching/doctrine of the Buddha” and literally translated as “natural law,” “factor,” “element,” or “phenomena.” The latter meaning is often connoted with a lower-case ‘d’ (*dharma/dhamma*).

Pastoral/Spiritual Care—Care for persons with spiritual needs or in spiritual distress; the work done by a chaplain. “Pastoral care” refers more specifically to Christian chaplaincy, while “spiritual care” refers more broadly to the work of Buddhist or non-Christian chaplains.

Pastoral Theology—The Christian branch of theology that “refers to a critical reflection on the nature and caring activity of God and of human persons before God, within the personal, social, communal, and cultural contexts of the world.”²⁷ There is, as of yet, no analogous formal branch of literature or methods for Buddhist spiritual care.

Prajñā—Sanskrit word typically translated as “wisdom;” it is also a technical term in Buddhism referring to the ability to correctly apprehend the nature of reality beyond conceptualization.²⁸

Reflection—A process involving serious thought, memory, and emotional awareness; it consists of recollecting encounters between chaplain and careseeker in light of the Dharma, social

²⁷ Emmanuel Yartekwei Lartey, “Pastoral Theology,” in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Ian A. McFarland et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), https://dtl.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/cupdct/pastoral_theology/0?institutionId=8909.

²⁸ See “*prajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 655.

sciences, other religions and spiritualities, culture, and/or context. It *may* involve meaning-making in relation to existential questions or concerns.

Reflexive—The ability of the chaplain (or researcher) to take themselves or the effect of their presence or actions into account and to do so, if possible, with moment-to-moment awareness.

Scripture/Canon—Buddhists consider a wide variety of texts to be scriptural or canonical, including the *Tripitaka* (the Pāli Canon), the Mahayana sutras (e.g., the Taisho Canon), and the Vajrayana tantras (e.g., the Kangyur²⁹). Most scriptural texts are designated by the name *sutta*, *sutra*, or *tantra*, and will also be identified based on the Buddhist canon to which they belong.

Spiritual—Concerned with existential, ultimate, or meaning-making matters, which may or may not involve formal religious traditions, doctrines, or practices.

Spiritual Friend—English translation of *kalyāṇamitra*³⁰ (Sanskrit), which literally means “good friend,” but more accurately refers to a “spiritual guide” or “religious mentor” whose assistance

²⁹ Note that the Tibetan canon, which includes many Mahayana sutras, will be classified as Vajrayana, because it also includes other works unique to Tibetan Buddhism that comment and build upon these earlier Mahayana texts.

³⁰ The term *kalyāṇamitra* is, like many Buddhist terms, complex and multivalent. It has no one set definition or translation, but rather comprises a set of roles or characteristics that describe a broad range of behaviors and relationships. The ultimate definition of the *kalyāṇamitra* is one who supports another on the path to enlightenment, usually in one of four particular ways: 1) as a teacher/guru, 2) as a peer, 3) as a moral exemplar, or 4) as a devotee providing material support through donation. Though this term has been translated here as “spiritual friend,” it need not imply the intimacy or reciprocity of modern American “friendship.” A longer, but more accurate translation may be “a moral exemplar and fellow seeker along the spiritual path who holds you in goodwill and assists you on your journey.” For more discussion of this term, see the section on “*Kalyāṇamitra* and the Buddhist Chaplain” in chapter six.

is a foundation for progress along the spiritual path. It is also a term used for the historical Buddha,³¹ who extolled spiritual friendship as “the whole of the holy life.”³²

Teachings/Commentaries—In addition to scriptures, Buddhists have authored a vast literature generally referred to as “teachings” or “commentaries,” and many more are still being produced today by living Buddhist teachers. For a written work to be considered a “teaching,” the author is assumed to be an authorized teacher (i.e., a lama, *roshi*, *bhante*, *acariya*, etc.) in a recognized Buddhist lineage. By this reckoning, most of the literature produced by religious studies scholars would not qualify unless they are also recognized teachers within a particular lineage *and* writing on behalf of that lineage, rather than from an “objective” scholarly viewpoint. Historically, teachings were often delivered orally and were only written down later, usually by students.

‘Theology’/‘Theological’—The more analytical, intellectual, or philosophical aspects of any religious tradition, as per David Tracy.³³ Throughout my work, I bracket (‘’) the term ‘theological’ to emphasize that it is not universally applicable to forms of Buddhist reflection. What theology is, does, and means in English may not accurately describe the scholarly or intellectual practices of Buddhists. Unfortunately, I have no better alternative to offer yet. Therefore, the single quotes (‘’) suggest that we take this term lightly in this discussion and

³¹ See “*kalyāṇamitra*,” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 410.

³² “Upaddha Sutta: Half (of the Holy Life)” (SN 45.2), trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu [from the Pāli], *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, last modified November 30, 2013, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn45/sn45.002.than.html>.

³³ David Tracy, “Comparative Theology,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 14, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 446-455, cited in Roger Jackson and John Makransky, ed., *Buddhist Theology: Critical Reflections by Contemporary Buddhist Scholars* (Surrey, UK: Routledge, 2000), 1.

consider possible alternatives when more members of the Buddhist community have shared their wisdom.

Conclusion

This study is significant in several ways. First, it is the first of its kind to directly study the work of Buddhist chaplains through questionnaires, interviews, and collecting written reflections. It takes seriously the idea that these chaplains (and chaplain interns) have wisdom to share. I do not engage with them as a disinterested observer, nor even as the more engaged participant-observer found throughout anthropological, sociological, and cultural studies research. I engage with them as a peer, a fellow Buddhist chaplain seeking answers not for the sake of dry scholarship, but due to the pressing concerns of my own questions in relation to my ongoing work in spiritual care. Their willingness to engage with me, the way they have repeatedly responded to my questions, their showing interest in the outcomes of this project, and the fact that they thanked me for my work, demonstrates to me that they, too, feel a pressing need to harness the collective wisdom of their fellow Buddhist chaplains. I could not do this without them.

Second, this is the first time that thick description has been employed to describe the working conditions of Buddhist chaplains (see chapters four and five) in such a detailed way, especially with attention given to relationships to supervisors and peer groups and to how Buddhist chaplains navigate a Christian-dominated profession. In prior literature, Buddhist chaplains have employed thick description to describe encounters with careseekers and, occasionally, their own lives and educations. However, this is the first time a study has attempted to compare the thick description provided by multiple Buddhist chaplains, drawing out similarities and differences in individuals' experiences. This study paints a portrait of the lives of

Buddhist chaplains as a group, not merely as isolated individuals. If a reader cannot relate to one subject, there is a good chance they will be able to relate to another. The chaplains in this study represent a diversity (if not the full diversity) of Buddhist experiences and viewpoints, each richly portrayed.

Third, while this is not the first time grounded theory has been employed to study Buddhists or Buddhist topics, it is the first time it has been applied to Buddhist spiritual care. I am particularly drawn to the use of grounded theory due to my background as a Buddhist. The Buddha advised his followers to see for themselves³⁴ if his teaching were effective—to try, test, and observe. I find grounded theory a method extremely compatible with the Dharma, as it uses the data to represent the richness of human experience and draws theories from that data to explain particular processes and the meanings we make from them. In keeping with Buddhist tradition (see chapter four), many of my study participants likewise described deriving “authority” from experience. Constructivist grounded theory, which I have used in this study, is particularly well suited to Buddhists, due to the Buddhist understanding of the nature of conventional knowledge as ever-changing and constructed of aggregates, even at the level of the self.³⁵ This is not an incidental consideration and will be explored in more detail in chapter five.

Fourth, this project is constructive. In addition to richly describing the work of Buddhist chaplains, it also constructs an interpretive theory to account for how Buddhist chaplains engage in the process of reflective meaning-making and assist others in doing the same. This is not my

³⁴ “Kalama Sutta: The Buddha's Charter of Free Inquiry,” trans. Soma Thera [from the Pāli], *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*. Last modified November 30, 2013, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/soma/wheel008.html>.

³⁵ “Khandha Sutta: Aggregates” (SN 22.48), trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu [from the Pāli], *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, last modified November 30, 2013, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn22/sn22.048.than.html>.

theory. Rather, in keeping with both grounded theory methods and the Dharma itself, this theory emerged from the data that represents the collective wisdom of my participants. I have called this theory the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care.

I did not invent the Three *Prajñās*, nor have I previously advocated for their use in spiritual care. Indeed, I, like my participants, was scarcely aware of them in my own practice until conducting this research. However, now that I have uncovered them, I see them ubiquitously. Likewise, I did not invent the application of the Three *Prajñās* in spiritual care. This is merely the natural application of an existing framework in a particular context, done by some participants explicitly and by others implicitly. Similarly, if we look, I believe we can find the Three *Prajñās* applied elsewhere, such as within Buddhist education. Inasmuch as the spiritual path in Buddhism is characterized as an ongoing learning process, then the Three *Prajñās* are integral to the spiritual life of most, if not all, Buddhists. Much of this path involves making conscious what was previously unconscious or overlooked, including how we engage with the path itself. Therefore, casting light on the Three *Prajñās* and employing them explicitly could be of great benefit to Buddhist chaplains, chaplains-in-training, teachers and faculty, CPE supervisors, peers, and other non-Buddhist audiences.

Unlike the traditional use of the Three *Prajñās* in the scriptures, commentaries, and modern literature, the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care occurs in four stages. These stages attempt to describe natural thresholds in the data. The four stages may not be a perfect fit, but this does not negate their application as a useful heuristic.

The first stage is the stage of the self: the chaplain hears, reads, or otherwise learns the Dharma within a given tradition; then analyzes, evaluates, and contemplates the Dharma as it appears in their daily life; and finally puts the Dharma into practice in their behavior and

meditation. If the chaplain is raised in an observant Buddhist household, the first stage and the second stage may be concurrent, but most of my participants came to the second stage of a student after the first.

As a student, the chaplain hears, reads, or otherwise learns the Dharma under the guidance of a teacher or mentor or as part of a prescribed course of study, often in a particular order with specific foci. They then analyze, evaluate, and contemplate the Dharma through specific activities and assignments, including writing and sharing with teachers, mentors, and friends. At this stage, they may also receive formal meditation training from an authorized meditation teacher. They practice the Dharma as part of a *sangha*, or community.

In the third stage, the Buddhist practitioner has decided to become a chaplain and begun the practice of providing spiritual care for others. They listen deeply—both to careseekers and to their own internal responses—in conversations with others; they analyze, evaluate, and contemplate their interactions with careseekers, often sharing them with CPE supervisors and peers; and they practice for the sake of improving their spiritual care, including appropriate self-care.

Finally, in the fourth stage, the Buddhist chaplain acts as a spiritual friend, accompanying careseekers as they themselves were accompanied in earlier stages. In this stage, the careseeker “listens” to the wisdom of their own knowledge and traditions through dialogue with the chaplain, and the Buddhist chaplain aids the careseeker in contemplating meanings, values, and goals and practices appropriate assessment and intervention to alleviate suffering and improve comfort and coping.

The Three *Prajñās*—listening, contemplating, and practicing—carried out in four stages—self, student, chaplain, and spiritual friend—make up the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection

in Spiritual Care. My thesis states that to the extent that the Buddhist chaplain has engaged sufficiently with the first three stages, they will be better able to accompany careseekers as a spiritual friend. Moreover, these stages are cumulative and recursive. The successful Buddhist chaplain will continue to engage with them at all levels and through each of the Three *Prajñās* for the remainder of their career, if not their life.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There is very little literature on the topic of reflection in the context of Buddhist spiritual care. Three works are notable, although each has its caveats. The first, an article by Thomas Kilts, one of the few Buddhist CPE supervisors, provides a Buddhist framework for aiding students in integrating their pastoral identity and pastoral functioning through ongoing reflection.³⁶ This article does not cover how to facilitate ‘theological’ reflection with careseekers. The second, a chapter by Stephen Clarke in an anthology on pastoral counseling, describes the role of and a method for reflection by Buddhist spiritual caregivers.³⁷ This article is intended for pastoral counselors with a Buddhist background, not Buddhist chaplains, but it does cover facilitating reflection with others. The third, an article on deep listening as contemplative pedagogy by Judith Simmer-Brown, explores a practice for teaching reflection to graduate students, including chaplains-in-training.³⁸ The pedagogy described is not primarily intended to teach students to reflect ‘theologically,’ although this is clearly one of its outcomes, and it does not cover facilitating reflection for others, although students may gain some small insight into this as a side effect of the activity described. These three works, which I summarize below, are an important starting point for exploring literature on ‘theological’ reflection for Buddhist chaplains, as we shall see when considering them in relation to existing Christian literature on reflection.

³⁶ Thomas Kilts, “A Vajrayana Buddhist Perspective on Ministry Training,” *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 62, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 273-281.

³⁷ Stephen Clarke, “Kalamitra: A Buddhist Approach to Pastoral Counseling,” in *Understanding Pastoral Counseling*, ed. Elizabeth A. Maynard and Jill L. Snodgrass (New York: Springer, 2015): 275-289.

³⁸ Judith Simmer-Brown, “‘Listening Dangerously’: Dialogue Training as Contemplative Pedagogy,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 33 (2013): 33-40.

First, I summarize the articles by Kilts, Clarke, and Simmer-Brown and then expand my review to literature on Buddhist chaplaincy in general. While also limited, this broader literature contains numerous examples of ‘theological’ reflection, but no direct exploration of the topic itself. Works for and about Buddhist chaplaincy include three books and a handful of chapters, articles, and theses or dissertations. Works by Buddhist chaplains and other Buddhist caregivers on topics relevant to Buddhist chaplains (e.g., illness, addiction, depression, relationships, etc.) are more numerous, but are usually intended for general audiences (i.e., self-help or Dharma teaching). I only cover a few examples of this literature, as it is too great to cover in detail and only tangentially related to my research topic. Works by Buddhist chaplains, about Buddhist chaplains, and/or for Buddhist chaplains constitutes the ‘primary’ literature for this study.

Second, I explore ‘secondary’ literature on related topics, including ‘theological’ reflection and comparative theologies. This work is not necessarily produced with Buddhism in mind, or when referencing Buddhism, it does not consider chaplaincy or spiritual/pastoral care. The secondary literature is much more voluminous than the primary literature and therefore engenders a more focused treatment related to important topics and themes. Wherever possible, I have related the secondary literature to the primary literature; this largely represents my own thinking and is not represented elsewhere in these disciplines.

The first topic I explore is that of ‘theological’ reflection, in which I look through the lenses of various Christian treatments of the topic to evaluate the Buddhist chaplaincy literature. This heuristic assists later conversation on the similarities and distinctiveness of Buddhist reflection practices, as found in the data gathered from study participants.

The second topic is comparative theologies, which considers some of the major issues related to bringing Buddhism into dialogue with theistic religions, particularly Christianity. I also

explore some ethical issues related to applying Christian-derived norms (in this case, chaplaincy standards and methods) to Buddhist caregivers and position myself within the ongoing dialogue on these issues.

Buddhist Chaplaincy

Thomas Kilts, Stephen Clarke, and Judith Simmer-Brown deal most directly with reflection in Buddhist spiritual care.

Kilts, an ACPE supervisor and the Director of Spiritual Care at the John Muir Medical Center in Concord, California, relates Vajrayana Buddhist insights to the process of CPE training for Buddhist students, with a special emphasis on path, process, and the Five Buddha Families. Kilts uses the mandala principle—a growth model or map used by various Buddhist traditions in which one approaches deeper levels of meaning, knowledge, or truth as one nears the center³⁹—with CPE students to evaluate and encourage growth in “pastoral identity, pastoral functioning, and their integration within each student,”⁴⁰ with a distinctly Buddhist emphasis on integration over mere ‘knowledge.’ “This,” Kilts notes, “demand[s] rigorous self reflection throughout the ‘training’ process”⁴¹ as part of the action-reflection model. Kilts invokes the classic Buddhist education metaphor of “the path as goal.”⁴² For him, the primary method of integrating pastoral identity (being) with pastoral functioning (doing) is via reflection. One focuses their reflections on whatever impedes or “blocks our ability to connect spiritually with others.”⁴³ We shall see the concept of ‘connection’ arising as an important theme within the data from study participants in

³⁹ See “maṇḍala,” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 523-524.

⁴⁰ Kilts, “Vajrayana Buddhist Perspective on Ministry,” 273.

⁴¹ Kilts, “Vajrayana Buddhist Perspective on Ministry,” 274.

⁴² Kilts, “Vajrayana Buddhist Perspective on Ministry,” 274.

⁴³ Kilts, “Vajrayana Buddhist Perspective on Ministry,” 279.

chapter four. Kilts describes this as an iterative process of “falling apart and coming back together again”⁴⁴ to foster integration through the thorough examination of our habitual patterns and hang-ups and how they impede enacting the enlightened nature found at the heart of our mandala. In this description, Kilts presages Clarke’s description of working with one’s own mind and then working with others, who are an integral part of our own spiritual path.⁴⁵

Stephen Clarke’s contribution to *Understanding Pastoral Counseling*, “Kalamitra⁴⁶: A Buddhist Approach to Pastoral Counseling,” is the closest example I have found of a Buddhist work on ‘theological’ reflection within the practice of spiritual care. Pastoral counseling is somewhat distinct from chaplaincy and is defined as “an approach to mental health care that draws on the wisdom of psychology and the behavioral sciences alongside spirituality/religion/theology,”⁴⁷ though it is clearly still a form of spiritual care. Counselees and counselors tend to enter an explicit, even contractual, ongoing relationship with defined goals, often in exchange for a fee. While there is overlap with chaplaincy, particularly in acute mental health hospital wards, a pastoral counselor generally possesses thorough graduate-level training in both mental health and religion and engages in long-term therapy with clients.⁴⁸ In contrast, chaplains tend to receive a cursory education in psychology and mental health, especially as it relates to acute cases meriting referral, but focus more on spiritual, religious, and existential

⁴⁴ Kilts, “Vajrayana Buddhist Perspective on Ministry,” 279.

⁴⁵ Kilts, “Vajrayana Buddhist Perspective on Ministry,” 273-281.

⁴⁶ *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* spells this term “*kalyāṇamitra*.” Therefore, throughout this text, whenever the Sanskrit is referenced, *kalyāṇamitra* will be used. However, the spelling of Buddhist terms in English-language texts is not always consistent. In modern literature, such as Clarke’s chapter, “*kalamitra*” is more common. This spelling will be preserved in quotations from the original.

⁴⁷ Judith Snodgrass, “Pastoral Counseling: A Discipline of Unity amid Diversity.” in *Understanding Pastoral Counseling*, ed. Elizabeth A. Maynard and Jill L. Snodgrass (New York: Springer, 2015), 5-6.

⁴⁸ Snodgrass, “Pastoral Counseling,” 5-6.

caregiving in times of crisis, rather than on long-term care (although in certain contexts, such as the military, colleges, and emergency responders, long-term relationships between chaplains and careseekers are not uncommon).

Nevertheless, Clarke presents the *kalyāṇamitra*, or spiritual friend, as an important Dharmic model for Buddhist counselors and chaplains. Clarke provides a brief overview of Buddhism and then focuses on the cessation of suffering as the religion's soteriological goal, one easily understandable for Buddhist and non-Buddhist alike, although the role of the self-concept in suffering is a uniquely Buddhist view. Clarke positions the Buddhist counselor as one who draws on both western and Buddhist psychology when working with Buddhist and non-Buddhist clients. Buddhist psychology is a way of understanding the mind that does not depend (or depends very little) on the metaphysical claims of the religion for its efficacy and is therefore suitable for practice with non-Buddhist clients, in Clarke's view, though these clients need to be "open to a Buddhist framework of assessing and intervening,"⁴⁹ as required by informed consent. Due to the code-switching necessary for Buddhists to function and receive an education in American society, Clarke notes that Buddhist counselors (and chaplains, I would contend) "typically have experience and clinical language that would allow a non-Buddhist client to feel comfortable."⁵⁰ Clarke also outlines potential "pitfalls" when working with Buddhist and non-Buddhist clients, which do tend to be similar, though in the latter case include the danger of the counselor "pushing a Buddhist 'agenda' or worldview."⁵¹ Clarke includes a personal reflection from his own experience in which he was guilty of such behavior. He then explicates

⁴⁹ Clarke, "Kalamitra," 281.

⁵⁰ Clarke, "Kalamitra," 281.

⁵¹ Clarke, "Kalamitra," 281.

kalyāṇamitra as “being whatever is needed”⁵² and draws correlations between the shepherd, wounded healer, other Christian metaphors, and the many metaphors within Buddhist traditions, including the sage, teacher, king, and physician, as well as the medicine, food, boat, raft, and bridge.

Clarke then turns to the subject of working with one’s own mind through the process of meditation, a common topic of conversation among the Buddhist chaplains I interviewed, and an area of emphasis that distinguishes Buddhism from its theistic counterparts. Only through working with one’s own mind can one develop compassion and loving-kindness as a sufficient base for working with another person’s mind. Clarke’s conclusion is worth sharing in its entirety, as we shall see these themes reemerge in the data from study participants:

If one has worked with one’s own mind and has a good grasp of how to intervene (i.e. stay with, hold compassionately, analytically investigate) with one’s own mind and its states, then one begins to know how the mind works and can begin to apply the same method / understanding to the situation of another. Although there is a great deal of commonality between most mind states such as anger, jealousy, and fear, the origins can be quite different. This is where one’s own lived experience may not completely cover the depth and extent of suffering that is experienced by others. As this is often the case, one can only go with another as far as one has gone with oneself. Interestingly, another factor can come into play at this moment. If one can stay open and not become overwhelmed, there is an inner wisdom (Buddha nature) that can help. Sometimes it is through a willingness to stay in unknowing with the intention to help that something arises. It could be sensing an inward voice that gives word or phrase, it could be expressing the “not knowing,” or it could be something that is genuine but one would never say in one’s “right mind.” Whatever this is, it is listening to one’s inner wisdom and wakefulness. It is also by relying on one’s training in healing by way of theory, experience, or other means that can be applied to help. All of these factors come together in the present moment of intervening with another being. First, it is staying or being with what arises in another. Second, it is being willing to see the similar experience, being willing to remember one’s own mind state and the effect it had. Then it is seeing how to hold that for oneself and possibly to analytically investigate it. Third, it is relying on everything one has at

⁵² Clarke, “Kalamitra,” 283.

hand to intervene. That intervention could be anything from meditative / contemplative practice to cognitive behavioral therapy to affirmations. This is how the *kalamitra* works; being whatever is needed and not tied to any one way of helping or necessarily to what the result should be.⁵³

In his chapter, Clarke provides the best example of clear ‘theological’ reflection from a Buddhist perspective that I have found. Yet even here, while performing reflection in his presentation of *kalyāṇamitra*, providing a method for other Buddhists to reflect through working with their own minds, and describing how one may facilitate reflection for others working with their minds, Clarke makes no explicit link between the practice of ‘theological’ reflection and the processes he describes. As we shall see, this is not uncommon for Christian authors, let alone Buddhists. In both cases, doing reflection is common, while talking about reflection is rare.

Judith Simmer-Brown, a faculty member at Naropa University, investigates contemplative pedagogy as a method in her graduate course on interreligious dialogue with chaplains-in-training and other students. Simmer-Brown reports that students grow in openness, curiosity, and empathy through this process, despite some “glitches,” including rare instances of defensiveness and “closing down.”

This course includes a practical component in which students dialogue with one another, reflecting on prompts such as, “The most challenging part of my spiritual or personal journey is...” Students are then asked to choose their own dialogue partner outside of class and have (and record) a meaningful conversation using William Isaacs’s framework of listen-suspend-respect-voice. Students then report on this experience in a type of verbatim, similar to the common CPE exercise of the same name. According to Simmer-Brown, “Students report that listening to the recordings of their dialogues is one of most transformative aspects of the course,” because, “when students recorded their inner responses to their dialogues, they discovered inner aspects of

⁵³ Clarke, “Kalamitra,” 286.

their spiritual and religious identities that had previously gone unnoticed.” This process led to healing and integration.⁵⁴

Likewise, as chaplains, when we facilitate reflective conversations with careseekers, we allow them to discover inner aspects of their own identities and strengths they may never have noticed previously. In this course, students are asked to perform ‘theological’ reflection with another, listen to the reflections of others, and then reflect on their conversations.⁵⁵

Kilts establishes the importance of reflection and its role in integrating pastoral identity and functioning, particularly as it relates to connecting with careseekers.⁵⁶ Clarke reinforces this role and extends it from working with oneself to working with others.⁵⁷ Simmer-Brown provides a method for teaching reflection through dialogue with others in the classroom.⁵⁸ Simmer-Brown has also contributed to the Buddhist chaplaincy literature summarized below, including writing the foreword to the first book on the topic.

As previously mentioned, the literature on Buddhist chaplaincy is limited. The first book on this topic is an anthology, *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, compiled mostly by faculty, students, and alumni of Harvard Divinity School’s (HDS) Buddhist Ministry Program and published in 2012.⁵⁹ Cheryl Giles and Willa Miller, who remain on the faculty at HDS in the Buddhist Ministry Program, edited this book; they each contributed a chapter to it, as did Daniel “Danny” Fisher, author and editor of the two later books on Buddhist chaplaincy. Giles and Miller’s anthology begins with a bold statement, situating the profession of Buddhist chaplaincy

⁵⁴ Simmer-Brown, “Listening Dangerously,” 38.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 36-37.

⁵⁶ Kilts, “Vajrayana Buddhist Perspective on Ministry,” 273-281.

⁵⁷ Clarke, “Kalamitra,” 275-289.

⁵⁸ Simmer-Brown, “Listening Dangerously,” 33-40.

⁵⁹ Giles and Miller, *The Arts of Contemplative Care*.

firmly within “contemplative care,” rather than the more traditional Christian “pastoral care” or even the more inclusive “spiritual care.” Rather, the editors explain and various authors affirm that “contemplative” care is “a kind of care that is informed by rigorous training in a meditative or contemplative tradition.” It is further defined as “the art of providing spiritual, emotional, and pastoral support, in a way that is informed by a personal, consistent contemplative or meditation practice.”⁶⁰

When I first read this definition, I did not believe that it included me. Though I was a Buddhist chaplain-in-training, I had never considered myself a “contemplative” person. I had certainly never endured “rigorous” or “consistent” meditative practice, regardless of how important my haphazard practice of *śamatha* (calm-abiding) meditation would later become. As we shall later see, at least one of my study participants evinced similar sentiments. Indeed, emphasis on meditation is an oft-noted hallmark of western lay Buddhism and, as such, a relative aberration in the long history of Buddhist traditions, where rigorous meditation practice was typically reserved for a select few monastic elites.⁶¹

Nevertheless, this is where Giles, Miller, and their contributors chose to center their dialogue on Buddhist chaplaincy. After nearly five years of campus chaplaincy, my meditation practice has become both more consistent and more central to my understanding of Buddhist chaplaincy. Twelve of my thirteen subjects likewise spoke of the deep significance of meditation in relation to their chaplaincy, as explored in chapters four and five.

The Arts of Contemplative Care is divided into six sections, each containing a number of striking essays by its thirty-four impressive authors. The first section outlines the roots of

⁶⁰ Giles and Miller, *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, xvii.

⁶¹ David L. McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 40-41.

contemplative care, beginning with a definition of Buddhist chaplaincy proposed by Jennifer Block, director of the Zen Hospice Project in San Francisco and a faculty member in various chaplaincy training programs. Block begins with the classic rhetorical move of linking something seemingly new to the oldest traditional precedent: “The Buddha was a chaplain,”⁶² she writes, and he was focused on helping people through the processes of old age, sickness, and death and ultimately on liberating living beings from suffering. Buddhist chaplains today continue this legacy by “accompanying individuals as their awakening and freedom from suffering unfolds.” Block succinctly explicates a theoretical underpinning based in non-self, non-clinging, and remaining open to interconnection and change that enable a Buddhist chaplain to perform the basic functions of the profession, including listening, facing suffering, and encouraging others to discover their own wisdom.⁶³

Next, there is a chapter by Daijaku Judith Kinst—professor in the chaplaincy program at the Institute for Buddhist Studies—which explores how Buddhists develop skills for the “appropriate response” to the myriad specific sufferings they will face as chaplains serving multi-religious populations. Block plants the roots, and Kinst raises the branches of the tree that is Buddhist practice, academic study, and supervised training in interreligious contexts.⁶⁴

Other authors build on these themes, adding flowers and leaves to this growing tree by sharing their own poignant stories of spiritual care, perspectives from their various specific Dharma traditions, concrete methods and tools, and insights into various chaplaincy contexts,

⁶² Jennifer Block, “Toward a Definition of Buddhist Chaplaincy,” in *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, ed. Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 3.

⁶³ Block, “Toward a Definition of Buddhist Chaplaincy,” 3-7.

⁶⁴ Daijaku Judith Kinst, “Cultivating an Appropriate Response: Educational Foundations for Buddhist Chaplains and Pastoral Care Providers,” in *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, ed. Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 9-16.

which is how the remainder of the book is structured. Section two addresses hospital chaplaincy, section three is on prison work, section four explores both college and military chaplaincy, and section five covers end-of-life care. The book concludes by addressing spiritual care within the context of the *sangha* itself, with Buddhist chaplains caring for Buddhist communities, and the role of chaplain as Dharma teacher (all of which sometimes, but do not always, overlap).⁶⁵

While the anthology presents a balanced representation of male and female authors, a cursory review of the names and biographies indicate that most authors are of non-Asian descent. Thus, the first book on the profession of Buddhist chaplaincy primarily represents the voices of western Buddhist converts.

Race, representation, power, and privilege are focal points of recent discussions on American Buddhism. Articles in journals such as *The Eastern Buddhist*⁶⁶ and the *Journal of Global Buddhism*⁶⁷ have outlined many issues related to race and representation in American Buddhism. Essays by Funie Hsu in *Lion's Roar*⁶⁸ and *Buddhist Peace Fellowship*⁶⁹ and longtime

⁶⁵ Giles and Miller, *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, vii-ix.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Galen Amstutz, "Kiyozawa in Concord: A Historian Looks again at Shin Buddhism in America," *The Eastern Buddhist* 41, no. 1 (2010): 101-150; Judith Snodgrass, "Japan's Contribution to Modern Global Buddhism: The World's Parliament of Religions Revisited," *The Eastern Buddhist* 43, no. 1-2 (2012): 81-102; Julia C. Huang, "Buddhism and Its Trust Networks between Taiwan, Malaysia, and the United States," *The Eastern Buddhist* 44, no. 2 (2013): 59-76.

⁶⁷ See, for example, Wakoh Shannon Hickey, "Two Buddhisms, Three Buddhisms, and Racism," *Journal of Global Buddhism* 11, no. 1 (2010): 1-25; Scott Mitchell, "'Christianity is for Rubes; Buddhism is for Actors': U.S. Media Representations of Buddhism in the Wake of the Tiger Woods Scandal," *The Journal of Global Buddhism* 13 (2012): 61-79; Ann Gleig, "From Buddhist Hippies to Buddhist Geeks: The Emergence of Buddhist Postmodernism?" *The Journal of Global Buddhism* 15 (2014): 15-33.

⁶⁸ Fannie Hsu, "We've Been Here All Along," *Lion's Roar*, May 17, 2017, <https://www.lionsroar.com/weve-been-here-all-along/>.

⁶⁹ Fannie Hsu, "Lineage of Resistance: When Asian American Buddhists Confronted White Supremacy," *Buddhist Peace Fellowship*, May 8, 2017, <http://www.buddhistpeacefellowship.org/lineage-of-resistance/>.

blogger Aaron Lee at *Angry Asian Buddhist*⁷⁰ have brought the debate about the public “face” of Buddhism further into the consciousness of American *sanghas*. This conversation has been the focus of gatherings such as the “Conference on Buddhism and Race in America” held at Harvard College on March 6, 2015,⁷¹ and again on April 22-23, 2016,⁷² and at the Sakyadhita USA conference at University of the West in April 2017, whose theme was “Diversity in the Dharma: Buddhist Women Engage Race and Exclusionary Politics in America.”⁷³ I hope future works will include greater Asian and Asian-American representation and cover the concerns of Asian-American communities and *sanghas*, whose needs are often quite distinct from their non-Asian counterparts.

My own experiences as a campus chaplain and my conversations with fellow chaplains working in other settings, especially hospitals, have led me to believe that Asian-American Buddhist careseekers, particularly first- or 1.5-generation immigrants, have different expectations and spiritual requests than their non-Asian Buddhist counterparts. Likewise, Asian-American Buddhist chaplains bring different worldviews to their work as spiritual caregivers. These issues have only begun to surface in the literature, as we shall see in the discussion of *A Thousand Hands*, below.

I have taken care in this work to ensure that six of the thirteen participants included in this study are Asian or Asian-American. While this is too few to provide any statistically

⁷⁰ Lee, *Angry Asian Buddhist* (blog), <http://www.angryasianbuddhist.com/>.

⁷¹ “Conference on Buddhism and Race in America,” *Harvard College*, <https://college.harvard.edu/college-events/conference-buddhism-and-race-america>.

⁷² “About the HBC Buddhism & Race Conference,” *Harvard Buddhist Community*, <https://harvardbuddhistcommunity.wordpress.com/>.

⁷³ Charlotte Colins, “Report on the Sakyadhita USA One-Day Conference,” *Sakyadhita USA*, <http://sakyadhitausa.org/conference.html>.

meaningful significance to differences in the data, it does ensure that broader worldviews are represented in this work than much of the earliest literature on Buddhist chaplaincy.

The second book on the topic of Buddhist chaplaincy, *Benefit Beings! The Buddhist Guide to Professional Chaplaincy* by Daniel Clarkson Fisher, was written as a doctoral dissertation at the same time as *The Arts of Contemplative Care* and self-published one year later, in 2013. It follows a similar pattern, first presenting a basic description of the profession—including a brief history of Buddhist chaplaincy, starting with the pioneering work of Rev. Madeline Koi Bastis, the first Buddhist chaplain to gain board certification through the Association of Professional Chaplains—and then offering five chapters describing the common settings for Buddhist chaplains, including healthcare, the military, prisons, law enforcement and emergency services, and higher education.⁷⁴ This review is more pragmatic and less theoretical, Dharmic, or personal than the essays in *The Arts of Contemplative Care*. Rather, *Benefit Beings!* covers the factors a chaplain must take into consideration should he or she wish to work in particular settings, such as board certification standards or Department of Defense regulations. Fisher also included material from interviews with Buddhist chaplains working in these settings.⁷⁵

The third book on Buddhist chaplaincy is also an anthology: *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, edited by Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher,⁷⁶ which echoes similar Christian works, such as *The Church Leader's*

⁷⁴ Danny Fisher, *Benefit Beings! The Buddhist Guide to Professional Chaplaincy* (San Bernardino, CA: Off the Cushion Books, 2013).

⁷⁵ Ibid., 41-42.

⁷⁶ Danny Fisher and Daniel Clarkson Fisher are the same person. Rev. Dr. Fisher changed how he listed his name as an author and editor in later works.

Counseling Resource Book.⁷⁷ *A Thousand Hands* consists of fifty short chapters providing overviews of topics such as mental illness, sexuality, organizational management, and addiction.⁷⁸ The book is divided into three parts. First, “Working with Ourselves” contains six chapters about presence, listening (by Willa Miller, one of the editors of *The Arts of Contemplative Care*)⁷⁹, communication, privilege, finances, and my own chapter on “Buddhist Practical Theology,” which provides a method for approaching issues in daily life and relating them to the Dharma.⁸⁰ The second part, “Working with Others,” is the largest, with twenty-nine chapters on diverse issues ranging from AIDS to trauma and numerous other sources of suffering. Part three, “Working with Communities,” includes thirteen chapters covering topics from group dynamics and community outreach to larger societal issues, such as poverty and race. Each chapter is organized into short sections with breakout boxes and includes an annotated list of resources, such as scriptures, research and scholarship, and books for general audiences. Websites and contact information for organizations related to a given topic are also included.

Unlike *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, which includes no citations, footnotes, or endnotes and only a limited bibliography, most chapters in *A Thousand Hands* are heavily footnoted, guiding readers to more information at every stage. The authors are almost evenly male and female, and at least fifteen Asian and Asian-American Buddhists contributed chapters, including those representing Japanese, Chinese, Thai, and Tibetan traditions (although many of

⁷⁷ Cynthia Franklin and Rowena Fong, *The Church Leader's Counseling Resource Book: A Guide to Mental Health and Social Problems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁷⁸ Nathan Jishon Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher, ed., *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook to Caring for Your Buddhist Community* (Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016).

⁷⁹ Willa B. Miller, “Listening as Spiritual Care,” in *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook to Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, ed. Nathan Jishon Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher (Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016), 25-30.

⁸⁰ Sanford, “Buddhist Practical Theology,” 55-65.

the non-Asian authors are also trained in these and other Buddhist traditions). I note these statistics—which are admittedly rough, as I cannot definitively verify the gender and ethnicity of all authors—because I believe that representation, inclusiveness, and diversity matter. A *Thousand Hands* also contains chapters explicitly dealing with the issues of power and privilege,⁸¹ acculturation,⁸² Asian-American identities,⁸³ race,⁸⁴ and both interfaith⁸⁵ and intrafaith considerations,⁸⁶ leading me to believe this issue is also alive for other Buddhist authors.

In addition to these books, there are a few chapters in multi-faith anthologies on spiritual care, including Mikel Monnet's chapter in *Injustice and the Care of Souls*, edited by Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook and Karen Brown Montagno,⁸⁷ and Daniel Clarkson Fisher's chapter in

⁸¹ Mushim Ikeda, "Understanding Our Own Power & Privilege," in *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, ed. Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher (Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016), 43-48.

⁸² Hiroshi Sasaki and Kin Cheung (George) Lee, "Acculturation," in *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, ed. Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher (Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016), 271-276.

⁸³ Chenxing Han, "Young Adult Asian American Identities," in *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, ed. Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher (Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016), 277-287.

⁸⁴ Katie Loncke, "Race," in *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, ed. Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher (Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016), 335-340.

⁸⁵ Nathan Jishin Michon, "Interfaith Considerations," in *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, ed. Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher (Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016), 359-362.

⁸⁶ Bill Aitken, "Intrafaith Considerations," in *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, ed. Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher (Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016), 363-364.

⁸⁷ Mikel Monnett, "Developing a Buddhist Approach to Pastoral Care: A Peacemaker's View," in *Injustice and the Care of Souls: Taking Oppression Seriously in Pastoral Care*, ed. Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook and Karen Brown Montagno (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 125-131.

Multifaith Views of Spiritual Care, edited by Daniel Schipani.⁸⁸ Both authors also contributed chapters to *The Arts of Contemplative Care*.

Monnet is a Board-Certified Chaplain with a background in healthcare chaplaincy and working with veterans and at-risk youth and a member of the Zen Peacemaker Order.⁸⁹ His chapter is written explicitly from the Zen Peacemaker viewpoint⁹⁰ and connects the practice of interfaith chaplaincy with the path of Mahayana Buddhism.⁹¹ It is one of only three chapters contributed by non-Christians to this book and the only one of a non-Abrahamic religious tradition.⁹²

Fisher was the faculty chair of the Buddhist Chaplaincy program at University of the West from 2008 to 2013. His chapter in Schipani's book explores Buddhist spiritual care using the "three *yanas*," a typology that reflects Fisher's own education at Naropa University in Colorado. Fisher points to the internal diversity of Buddhist traditions and then explicates his

⁸⁸ Danny Fisher, "Three Yanas for Wise Caring: A Buddhist Perspective on Spiritual Care," in *Multifaith Views in Spiritual Care*, ed. Daniel S. Schipani (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2013), 44-64.

⁸⁹ Mikel Monnett, LinkedIn Profile, accessed September 29, 2017, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/chap-mikel-ryuho-monnett-bcc-cdca-77103711/>.

⁹⁰ The Zen Peacemaker order was founded by Roshi Bernie Glassman, a teacher who has had a major impact on the field and practice of Buddhist chaplaincy through his advocacy of tenants for engagement (not knowing, bearing witness, and taking action) and his involvement with organizing witness-bearing programs in locations of extreme suffering and poverty, such as the Holocaust camp at Auschwitz or sites of genocide in Rwanda. Following Buddhist tradition, Glassman has had the most impact through oral teaching and organizing practice, as we see in his student, Mikel Monnett. Glassman's books are more general and belong to a genre of pioneering works in American Zen and are therefore not included in this literature review. See, for example: Bernie Glassman and Rick Fields, *Instructions to the Cook: A Zen Master's Lessons in Living a Life that Matters* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publishing, 2013); Bernie Glassman, *Infinite Circle: Teaching in Zen* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publishing, 2003).

⁹¹ Monnett, "Developing a Buddhist Approach to Pastoral Care," 125-130.

⁹² Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook and Karen Brown Montagno, ed., *Injustice and the Care of Souls: Taking Oppression Seriously in Pastoral Care* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).

own approach to care based in mindfulness, the *bodhisattva* path, *bodhichitta*, and the *pāramitās*, particularly *prajñāpāramitā*, or the perfection of wisdom.⁹³ Fisher's chapter is one of six contributed by non-Christian authors and one of four from non-Abrahamic traditions.⁹⁴

I note the religious origins of other chapters in these two books, which explicitly seek out diversity in their authorship, to demonstrate the pervasive Christian dominance in the field of spiritual care. These two chapters are noteworthy both as some of the first published literature on Buddhist chaplaincy and in their clear intention that their primary audience is other professional chaplains; however, the viewpoints they represent are, perhaps unavoidably, personal and limited to only two particular lineages of Buddhism.

Other anthologies with chapters by Buddhist chaplains are written for one of three reasons: 1) primarily for the benefit of multidisciplinary team members (e.g., nurses⁹⁵), 2) on specific topics (e.g., prayer⁹⁶ or pastoral counseling⁹⁷), or 3) about particular contexts (e.g.,

⁹³Fisher, "Three Yanas for Wise Caring," 44-64.

⁹⁴ Daniel S. Schipani, *Multifaith Views in Spiritual Care*. (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2013).

⁹⁵ See, for example, Theodore M. Ludwig, "South Asian Traditions," in *Spiritual Care in Nursing Practice*, ed. Kristen L. Mauk and Nola A. Schmidt (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams, & Wilkins, 2004), 131-150; Theodore M. Ludwig, "Buddhist Traditions," in *Spiritual Care in Nursing Practice*, ed. Kristen L. Mauk and Nola A. Schmidt (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams, & Wilkins, 2004), 151-164; and Theodore M. Ludwig, "East Asian Traditions" in *Spiritual Care in Nursing Practice*, ed. Kristen L. Mauk and Nola A. Schmidt (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams, & Wilkins, 2004), 165-188.

⁹⁶ See, for example, Madeline Ko-i Bastis, "A Buddhist Response to Larry Dossey," in *Scientific and Pastoral Perspectives on Intercessory Prayer: An Exchange Between Larry Dossey, M.D., and Health Care Chaplains*, ed. Larry Dossey and Larry VandeCreek (New York: Haworth Pastoral Press, 1998), 87-96.

⁹⁷Clarke, "Kalamitra," 275-289.

pediatric healthcare,⁹⁸ hospice care,⁹⁹ or geriatric care¹⁰⁰). Buddhist authors have also published works, both in anthologies and as monographs, on many of these topics, particularly chronic illness and end-of-life care,¹⁰¹ psychotherapy or counseling,¹⁰² and the applications of

⁹⁸ See, for example, Keith Munnings and Madeleine Parkes, "Care of a Buddhist Child and their Family," in *Multifaith Care for Sick and Dying Children and Their Families: A Multi-Disciplinary Guide*, ed. Paul Nash, Madeleine Parkes, and Zamir Hussain (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2015), 32-54; Kusumavarsa Hart, "A Buddhist Mother's Reflections on Spiritual and Religious Care," in *Multifaith Care for Sick and Dying Children and Their Families: A Multi-Disciplinary Guide*, ed. Paul Nash, Madeleine Parkes, and Zamir Hussain (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2015), 175-185.

⁹⁹ See, for example, Anne Bruce, "Welcoming an Old Friend: Buddhist Perspectives on Good Death," in *Religious Understandings of a Good Death in Hospice Palliative Care*, ed. Harold G. and Kelli I. Stajduhar (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2012), 51-76; Edwin C. Hui and Danny C. Leung, "Chinese Religions and Hospice Care," in *Religious Understandings of a Good Death in Hospice Palliative Care*, ed. Harold G. and Kelli I. Stajduhar (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2012), 145-165; and Robert Florida and Pinit Ratanakul, "Buddhist Hospice Care in Thailand," 167-189, in *Religious Understandings of a Good Death in Hospice Palliative Care*, ed. Harold G. and Kelli I. Stajduhar (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2012). In addition, see Lobsang Rapgay, "A Buddhist Approach to End-of-Life Care" in *A Time for Listening and Caring: Spirituality and the Care of the Chronically Ill and Dying*, ed. Christina M. Puchalski (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 131-138; Arthur O. Ledoux, "The Healing Touch of Awareness: A Buddhist Perspective on Death, Dying, and Pastoral Care," in *Making Sense of Death: Spiritual, Pastoral, and Personal Aspects of Death, Dying, and Bereavement*, ed. Gerry R. Cox, Robert Bendiksen, and Robert G. Stevenson (Amityville, NY: Baywood, 2003), 101-110; and Betty J. Kramer, "Buddhist Perspectives on End-of-Life Care" in *Living with Grief: Spirituality and End-Of-Life Care*, ed. Kenneth J. Doka and Amy S. Tucci (Washington, DC: Hospice Foundation of America, 2011), 207-219.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Ruwan Palapathwala, "Bodhi, Karuna, and Metta: Buddhist Perspectives for a Theology of Pastoral Care for the Ageing and Persons with Disabilities," in *Ageing, Disability, and Spirituality: Addressing the Challenge of Disability in Later Life*, ed. Elizabeth MacKinlay (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2008), 145-162.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, Joan Halifax, *Being with Dying: Cultivating Compassion and Fearlessness in the Presence of Death* (Boston: Shambhala, 2008); Merrill Collett, *At Home with Dying: A Zen Hospice Approach* (Boston: Shambhala, 1999); and Jonathan S. Watts and Yoshiharu Tomatsu, *Buddhist Care for the Dying and Bereaved* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012).

¹⁰² See, for example, Mark Epstein, *Thoughts without a Thinker: Psychotherapy from a Buddhist Perspective* (New York: Basic Books, 2013); Andrew Olendzki, *Unlimiting Mind: The Radically Experiential Psychology of Buddhism* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2010); and John

mindfulness and meditation in many different settings,¹⁰³ though not necessarily with the Buddhist chaplain in mind.

Other books on spiritual or pastoral care sometimes consider the needs of Buddhist careseekers, though they are generally written by and for non-Buddhist (usually Christian) chaplains and generally amount to a brief introduction to Buddhist religions and cultures. It is sufficient for my purposes to note that this literature exists, though it is both too voluminous and too general in its approach to these issues to summarize in detail here. As an example, I will summarize one chapter from one of the pioneers in the field.

Madeline Koi Bastis, the first Buddhist Board-Certified Chaplain, contributed a chapter to *Scientific and Pastoral Perspectives on Intercessory Prayer*, published in 1998. This was one of the first interreligious anthologies to feature the perspective of a Buddhist chaplain, though the topic is clearly directed by theistic assumptions about the role of religion in spiritual care.¹⁰⁴ In fact, Bastis opens her reflection with this very struggle, forthrightly describing her perspective as an American convert to Buddhism who, in her first CPE unit declared, “We [Buddhists] don’t have prayer!”¹⁰⁵ Bastis, like many of the Buddhist chaplains in this study, reflects on the

Welwood, *Toward a Psychology of Awakening: Buddhism, Psychotherapy, and the Path of Personal and Spiritual Transformation* (Boston: Shambhala, 2000).

¹⁰³ See, for example, Andy Fraser, *The Healing Power of Meditation: Leading Experts on Buddhism, Psychology, and Medicine Explore the Health Benefits of Contemplative Practice* (Boston: Shambhala, 2013); Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness* (New York: Hyperion, 2005); and Daniel J. Siegel, *Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation* (New York: Bantam Books, 2010).

¹⁰⁴ Richard Payne notes how these theistic assumptions tend to dominate any conversation on religion in western discourse, especially if we uncritically apply theistic terms such as ‘theology’ to the study of Buddhism and its practice. Bastis’s chapter is a good example of what Payne is warning against. For more, see Payne, “Why ‘Buddhist Theology’ is Not a Good Idea,” 37-72.

¹⁰⁵ Bastis, “A Buddhist Response to Larry Dossey,” 87.

accommodation she eventually came to with prayer through a process of broadening her perspective on the role of prayer from talking to a personified deity to “communication with the Absolute,” in which case, Bastis concluded, “In fact, Buddhists do pray,” inasmuch as they cultivate a “prayerful state of mind.”¹⁰⁶

Bastis then outlines several Buddhist traditions that use ‘intercessory prayer,’ including the *metta* (loving-kindness) traditions and the transference of merit of southeast Asian Theravada; the chanting of the Lotus Sutra and the counting of recitations on the 108-bead mala of east Asian Mahayana; and the guru yoga, mandala visualizations, prostration practices, and *tonglen* (exchanging suffering and joy meditation) of Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism.¹⁰⁷

As we shall see below, Bastis’s chapter itself is an example of ‘theological’ reflection by a Buddhist chaplain and closely matches Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Francis Ward’s explanation of the correlation method.¹⁰⁸ It is also an example of a chapter written by a Buddhist chaplain in explicit relation to Christian norms for spiritual care. I contend that, as Buddhists, we must proactively discover, develop, and explicate our own norms for spiritual care, rather than simply continue reacting to Christian standards.

Thankfully, journal articles on Buddhist chaplaincy or by Buddhist chaplains have recently become more common. Authors such as Duane Bidwell, Willa Miller, Joan Halifax, and others have explored how various Buddhist teachings are actualized in the context of spiritual care. Roshi Joan Halifax has been particularly prolific in this field for many years,¹⁰⁹ and at Upaya Zen Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico, she founded one of a handful of unaccredited (but

¹⁰⁶ Bastis, “A Buddhist Response to Larry Dossey,” 87.

¹⁰⁷ Bastis, “A Buddhist Response to Larry Dossey,” 87-96.

¹⁰⁸ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 138-169.

¹⁰⁹ For a full bibliography, see: “Roshi’s Writings,” *Upaya Zen Center* website, accessed on March 23, 2018, <https://www.upaya.org/about/roshi/writings/>.

well-regarded) Buddhist chaplaincy training programs. Halifax pays special attention to death, dying, and hospice care, which is the subject of her book *Being With Dying: Cultivating Compassion and Fearlessness in the Presence of Death*. This book is a good example of rich work written by a Buddhist chaplain that is relevant to the field, but like Koi-Bastis's work, it is designed to engage a general audience.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, Halifax's articles are targeted at a more professional audience, appearing in journals such as the *Journal of Palliative Medicine*,¹¹¹ *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*,¹¹² and elsewhere. More examples of this, related to the praxis method of 'theological' reflection, will be summarized in the section below.

Other articles by a variety of authors deal with topics of common concern among spiritual caregivers from a Buddhist point of view, such as aging, illness and death, addiction and recovery, mental health issues, and other topics, such as those found in *A Thousand Hands*. I have limited my review here to a few of the more illustrative examples from the first category.

Duane Bidwell, a self-described Buddhist/Christian and faculty member at Claremont School of Theology (and committee chair for this dissertation), describes how he deploys two key Buddhist teachings—deep listening and spiritual friendship—with both Buddhist and Christian careseekers. He also discusses the struggle of how crossing interreligious boundaries can cause particular practices “to become unmoored from [their Buddhist] origins” and “conflated” with “classic Christian concepts,”¹¹³ just as Richard Payne warns against.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Halifax, *Being with Dying*.

¹¹¹ Joan Halifax, “Compassion Silence in the Patient-Clinician Encounter: A Contemplative Approach,” *Journal of Palliative Medicine* 12, no. 12, (2009): 1113-1117.

¹¹² Joan Halifax, “G.R.A.C.E. for Nurses: Cultivating Compassion in Nurse/Patient Interactions,” *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice* 4, no. 1 (2014): 121-128.

¹¹³ Duane Bidwell, “Deep Listening and Virtuous Friendship: Spiritual Care in the Context of Religious Multiplicity,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 35 (2015): 3-4.

¹¹⁴ Payne, “Why ‘Buddhist Theology’ is Not a Good Idea,” 37-72.

Bidwell's struggle emerges from some of his earlier work, including a 2002 article entitled, "Developing an Adequate 'Pneumatraumatology': Understanding the Spiritual Impacts of Traumatic Injury." In this early paper, he appears to conflate classic Buddhist concepts such as *paticca samupada*, or dependent co-origination, and the Two Truths (discussed more in chapter five) with the soteriological goal of "help[ing] people turn toward God,"¹¹⁵ which is most assuredly not the original purpose of these concepts.¹¹⁶

My study participants likewise struggled with interpreting their own Buddhist worldviews for the sake of their CPE peers, fearing those open-hearted and well-meaning peers would nevertheless gloss over deep and significant Buddhist concepts with similar-but-not-the-same Christian ideas or "borrow" the ideas in service of Christian ends, as Bidwell did in his earlier work. In the other direction, participants struggled to not do the same thing to their Christian and theistic careseekers, as described in chapter four. Bidwell's insight into this struggle is of particular relevance to the discussion of the ethical issues surrounding Buddhist-Christian comparative theology. Bidwell himself is an example of a trained Presbyterian minister practicing 'theological' reflection with Dharma teaching and concepts using (at least in part) Christian methods.¹¹⁷ Other Buddhist teachers, such as Willa Miller from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, also focus their practice reflections in this vein.

¹¹⁵ Duane Bidwell, "Developing an Adequate 'Pneumatraumatology': Understanding the Spiritual Impacts of Traumatic Injury," *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 56, no. 2 (2002): 141.

¹¹⁶ Rather, they are used to help Buddhist practitioners apprehend the true nature of *samsara*, or cyclic existence, and to understand the nature of *prajñā*, or wisdom leading to the cessation of suffering and renunciation of *samsara*, respectively, without any reference to a deity of any kind.

¹¹⁷ Though to what extent his reflection methods are Christian or Buddhist is hard to tease apart. One can only say for certain that his initial training in theological reflection was Christian in origin.

Miller's article on deep listening in *Buddhist-Christian Studies* in 2015 expands on the theme she began in her chapter in *The Arts of Contemplative Care*. Miller explicitly refers to this work as "a reflection" aimed at educators, ministers, and Dharma teachers, who all perform a sort of 'preaching.' Miller attempts to balance the act of preaching with the act of listening to enhance one's wisdom about the needs of the individual audience members. Miller adapts her instructions for deep listening (from her chapter intended for chaplains) to this article (intended for educators), drawing specifically from Tibetan Buddhist wisdom and meditative techniques. While Miller's target audience has changed, chaplains could just as easily employ the teaching provided, and her explication is more detailed than in her chapter from *The Arts of Contemplative Care*. Here, she provides three criteria for deep listening: first, that it be cultivated; second, that it be attentive; and third, that it be loving and compassionate. She provides instructions for cultivation of and criteria to discern attentiveness, and she describes the roles of love and compassion and their impact on the outcome of our listening.¹¹⁸ Her final definition: "Deep listening is a practice of listening with a disciplined, embodied, and compassionate attention that attends to the present moment, the narrative arc of speech, and to the speaker's humanity."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Willa B. Miller, "Like an Elephant Pricked by a Thorn: Buddhist Meditation Instructions as a Door to Deep Listening," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 35 (2015): 15-20. We can see an echo of the Three *Prajñās* Framework (listening-contemplating-practicing) in Miller's three criteria, starting with listening to the instructions, then contemplating one's own experience of attentiveness, and finally practicing love and compassion in service of a soteriological goal. This is an example from beyond the primary data collected for this study of the threefold framework implicitly at work within Buddhist reflection on a topic. See chapter five for more examples of this framework within the data and Buddhist literature.

¹¹⁹ Miller, "Like an Elephant Pricked by a Thorn," 20.

Many of the study participants implicitly and explicitly referenced the role of listening in the study data. Miller's article is a good example of fully considered and well-researched 'theological' reflection on this topic and an example of the praxis method of theological reflection outlined by Graham, Walton, and Ward,¹²⁰ which is described in more detail in the following section. For Miller and other Buddhist chaplains, deep listening is an extension of mindfulness practice, which can be employed in many ways to provide spiritual care to those in need.

Deploying mindfulness in service of spiritual care is a common topic among Buddhist (and other) chaplains and allied professions. For example, Harrison Blum, a former chaplain at Franciscan Hospital for Children in Brighton, Massachusetts, and current Director of Religious and Spiritual Life at Emerson College, reports on the outcomes of the Mindfulness Allies Project conducted with Northwestern University, a project that provided five weeks of secular mindfulness training adapted from Buddhist teachings to low-income residents. The project primarily served to test a possible structure for mindfulness training courses that would actually be accessible to and enjoyed by low-income and/or people of color who may be interested in, but not otherwise able to take advantage of, such training.¹²¹ The project did not seek to justify the value of such training, which has already been ably documented in other literature, but it could serve as a Buddhist example of Whitehead's concrete extreme for reflection (that is, reflection to solve a pragmatic problem, with almost no 'theological' content), which I explore in the following section.

¹²⁰ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 170-199.

¹²¹ Harrison Blum, "Mindfulness Equity and Western Buddhism: Reaching People of Low Socioeconomic Status and People of Color," *International Journal of Dharma Studies* 2, no. 1 (2014): 1-18.

One of the earliest works on the topic is another doctoral dissertation from 2006 by Adele Smith-Penniman at the Andover Newton Theological School titled, succinctly, “Buddhist Resources in Pastoral Care.” Smith-Penniman devotes a full five of her seven chapters to mindfulness, as well as several sections of the remaining two. Smith-Penniman is herself a Unitarian Universalist minister, though with clear affinities for and understanding of Buddhism. She brings Buddhists such as Jon Kabat-Zinn—the inventor of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, who merits an entire chapter—and others involved in various forms of mindfulness-based therapy (e.g., Marsha Linehan, Mark Epstein, Mark Williams, John Teasdale, and Zenel Segal) into conversation with pastoral theologians such as Howard Clinebell, Margaret Kornfeld, and Gerald May. While discussing ministry of presence in relation to various pastoral care metaphors (e.g., shepherd, witness, wounded healer), she also brings a smorgasbord of Buddhist concepts to bear, including the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path; suffering and impermanence; Buddhist responses such as wisdom, meditation, and mindfulness; and ethics and virtues such as the *brahmaviharas* (compassion, loving-kindness, sympathetic joy, and equanimity). Smith-Penniman makes a unique contribution by exploring the Buddhist caregiver as social witness via the lens of engaged Buddhism,¹²² a topic that Monnet also touched on in his chapter in *Injustice and the Care of Souls*.¹²³

Although it is a useful study for any Buddhist chaplain or chaplain-in-training, I find it interesting that Smith-Penniman’s chosen Buddhist dialogue partners are all from the fields of psychology, psychotherapy, and medicine. While many are also authorized Dharma teachers,

¹²² Adele Smith-Penniman, “Buddhist Resources in Pastoral Care” (DMin diss., Andover Newton Theological School, 2006).

¹²³ Monnet, “Developing a Buddhist Approach to Pastoral Care,” 128.

they tend to write from the perspective of clinicians first and foremost, rather than as religious authorities or spiritual caregivers. Smith-Penniman could have chosen any number of Buddhist explications of mindfulness, including bestselling works on the topic by Thich Nhat Hanh,¹²⁴ the Dalai Lama,¹²⁵ Pema Chödrön,¹²⁶ Bhante Henepola Gunaratana,¹²⁷ and many others. However, she, like many Americans, came to mindfulness through the psychological/secular doorway.

McMahan notes that the ‘psychologization’ of Buddhism is one of the predominant trends of Modernism, including a recent trend toward “clinical applications of Buddhist meditation”¹²⁸ by teachers such as Kabat-Zinn. It is one of the ways Buddhism gains legitimacy in light of Christian hegemony in the west. While psychological language makes Buddhism more accessible to western audiences, it is also “stripped of much of [its] traditional religious significance.”¹²⁹ Smith-Penniman provides an example of this trend in the literature on Buddhist spiritual care.

In another example of this subsection of literature, Karthryn Bilotti-Stark examined “Compassionate Awareness and Transformation: The Relevancy of Mindfulness Teachings and Practices in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care” in her master’s thesis for the Graduate Theological Union in 2012. Bilotti-Stark treats mindfulness as an essential competency for Buddhist chaplains. She conducted a survey of mindfulness practices among Buddhist chaplains and

¹²⁴ Thich Nhat Hân and Mai Vo-Dinh, *The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual on Meditation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987).

¹²⁵ His Holiness The Dalai Lama and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Heart of Meditation: Discovering Innermost Awareness* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 2017).

¹²⁶ Pema Chödrön, *How to Meditate: A Practical Guide to Making Friends with Your Mind* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 2013).

¹²⁷ Henepola Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2011).

¹²⁸ McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 56.

¹²⁹ McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 52-57.

provided an exegesis of the *Satipatthana Sutta*, or *Four Foundations of Mindfulness*, a primary Buddhist text from the Pāli Cannon.¹³⁰

Bilotti-Stark found that mindfulness training supports a chaplain's spiritual formation and "may be regarded as a competency in the training of professional chaplains as, while not explicitly stated, a high degree of mindfulness is implied by the Association of Professional Chaplains in its list of competencies." She draws direct comparisons between the Buddhist literature on mindfulness and the spiritual care literature's descriptions of pastoral competencies, putting scholars such as Howard Clinebell and David Switzer into conversation with Pema Chödrön and Jon Kabat-Zinn.¹³¹

This thesis is a great example of practical 'theological' construction in the field of Buddhist spiritual care and will be referenced more thoroughly in chapter four. For now, it also serves as an excellent scholarly example of how the focus on mindfulness among the general literature has impacted the manner in which Buddhist chaplains implement spiritual care (a theme of *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, but not explored with the same depth by any of the authors in that anthology, due to the brief nature of the chapters).

Aging, illness, and death are also common topics for Buddhist chaplains. In addition to contributions to the academic literature in these areas, chaplains and Dharma teachers have also published many books for general audiences to assist those coping directly with illness, injury, aging, or their own impending death or that of a loved one. Buddhism has always had an affinity for this topic, as illness and death are named as the primary sources of suffering in the Buddha's

¹³⁰ Kathryn Bilotti-Stark, "Compassionate Awareness and Transformation: The Relevancy of Mindfulness Teachings and Practices in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care" (master's thesis, Graduate Theological Union, 2012).

¹³¹ Bilotti-Stark, "Compassionate Awareness and Transformation," 52-60.

first sermon following his enlightenment.¹³² Buddhists have since developed sophisticated teachings and contemplative practices to help individuals come to terms with this universal form of human suffering.

Pam McGrath, a researcher with the Queensland University of Technology and not herself a chaplain, investigated a “unique” Buddhist home hospice program in the Brisbane area. McGrath found “Buddhist discourse is highly compatible with hospice care,” particularly due to its emphasis on a spiritual/religious path that is first focused inward, toward a deep understanding of “self,” and only then outward toward the interconnectedness of all things. McGrath finds:

Although the palliative care/hospice literature is awash with sensitive insights into the experiences of the dying and their caregivers, this wisdom is not usually accompanied by an emphasis on the role of self-awareness, or the need for ‘pure motivation’ in acting out this understanding. Indeed, even in such an important document on hospice spirituality as the ‘Assumptions and principles of spiritual care’ which was developed by the Spiritual Care Working Group of the International Work Group on Death, Dying and Bereavement (1990: 78–81), no direct reference is made to self-awareness or to the need for purity of motivation, in spite of the sensitivity of the document to the needs of the dying.¹³³

In keeping with McGrath’s findings, the participants in this study frequently called out reflections on authenticity, motivation, and intention as being important concepts for them, and these may be areas in which Buddhists are distinct from their theistic counterparts.

¹³² “Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion” (SN 56.11), trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu [from the Pāli], *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, last modified November 30, 2013, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.than.html>.

¹³³ Pam McGrath, “Buddhist Spirituality: A Compassionate Perspective on Hospice Care,” *Mortality* 3, no. 3 (1998): 256-257.

Madeline Koi Bastis, Robert Thurman, and Leslie Blackhall, MD, all participated in a panel on “Asian Spiritual Traditions and Their Usefulness to Practitioners and Patients Facing Life and Death,” moderated by James Gordon and later published under the same name in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*.

In it, Bastis provides a touching reflection on the death of her father and how it influenced her later work in healthcare and hospice,¹³⁴ demonstrating a history of working with her own mind, as described by Clarke,¹³⁵ and using that to connect with others, as described by Kilts.¹³⁶

Bastis published another personal reflection on working with a patient named “Thom” in *The Journal of Pastoral Care* in 1996, one of the earliest articles by a Buddhist to appear in a publication dedicated to spiritual caregiving. It is a short meditation on change through the story of the life and death of an AIDS-sufferer. As a creative piece, there is no long explication of Buddhist philosophy or psychology, just a poignant finger pointing at the moon of impermanence.¹³⁷ Articles such as these provide glimpses of Buddhist approaches to spiritual care, but do not provide a comprehensive theory or guide to praxis for Buddhist spiritual care.

As with the general Buddhist literature on illness, aging, and death, there is a growing genre of Buddhist books and articles on topics relevant to Buddhist chaplains, such as depression, addiction, relationships, work, etc. This literature tends to be either from academics

¹³⁴ James S. Gordon, Leslie Blackhall, Madeline Ko-I Bastis, and Robert A.F. Thurman, “Asian Spiritual Traditions and Their Usefulness to Practitioners and Patients Facing Life and Death,” *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 8, no. 5 (2002): 603-608.

¹³⁵ Clarke, “Kalamitra,” 275-289.

¹³⁶ Kilts, “Vajrayana Buddhist Perspective on Ministry,” 273-281.

¹³⁷ Madeline Ko-I Bastis, “Thom’s Garden,” *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 50, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 221-222.

in the social sciences engaging Buddhism as a dialogue partner (often in relation to meditation methods, per the trend of ‘psychologization’) or for general audiences (i.e., self-help or Dharma teaching).

Bastis, for example, has published two books based on her work as a Buddhist chaplain with the Peaceful Dwelling Project, which she founded. It provides spiritual care and retreats for chronically ill persons outside the hospital setting. *Peaceful Dwelling: Meditations for Healing and Living* was published in 2000 and serves as a meditation guide for those suffering through life-changing illness or injury.¹³⁸ *Heart of Forgiveness: A Practical Path to Healing*, published in 2011, is a guide to the practice of forgiveness for the chronically ill and dying.¹³⁹ While written from the perspective of a chaplain who has aided countless careseekers in need of spiritual care, both books are intended for the careseekers themselves, not for other Buddhist chaplains or spiritual caregivers. They provide little meta-commentary for the sake of the caregiver.

Likewise, there are now many books on Buddhism and addiction recovery, including *Refuge Recovery* by Noah Levine,¹⁴⁰ which has spawned a meetings movement similar to Alcoholics Anonymous, and books on how to approach one’s work from a Buddhist perspective, such as *Awake at Work* by Michael Carroll.¹⁴¹ I do not include these examples within the

¹³⁸ Madeline Ko-I Bastis, *Peaceful Dwelling: Meditations for Healing and Living* (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 2000).

¹³⁹ Madeline Ko-I Bastis, *Heart of Forgiveness: A Practical Path to Healing* (York Beach, ME: Red Wheel/Weiser, 2011).

¹⁴⁰ Noah Levine, *Refuge Recovery: A Buddhist Path to Recovering from Addiction* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2014).

¹⁴¹ Michael Carroll, *Awake at Work: 35 Practical Buddhist Principles for Discovering Clarity and Balance in the Midst of Work's Chaos* (Boston: Shambhala, 2006).

literature of Buddhist chaplaincy, though it is important for Buddhist chaplains to be aware of them as key resources on specific issues.

As we have seen, very little of the existing literature on Buddhist chaplaincy or related topics deal with ‘theological’ reflection, although many of them perform it implicitly. Buddhist chaplains, on the other hand, must explicitly perform this type of reflection and aid careseekers in doing such reflection. Christian traditions, from which the profession of chaplaincy originates, have developed a helpful literature on various methods of theological reflection, which I will now explore.

‘Theological’ Reflection

Pastoral theology is the theoretical counterpart of the practice of spiritual care and counseling. ‘Theological’ reflection is an important practice in the development of this discipline. The qualifications for professional chaplaincy states that chaplains must be able to “Facilitate theological reflection in the practice of pastoral care.”¹⁴²

This can be understood in two ways. First, it suggests that chaplains help careseekers perform their own ‘theological’ reflection. In other words, through skilled conversation and compassionate questioning, they help careseekers reveal their own understandings of religion, spirituality, God, the universe, or other existential questions; seek out inner strength and direction; and find social supports (both spiritual and mundane) to aid them in their time of need. Chaplains help careseekers make spiritual sense of their past, present, and future.

Second, it suggests that chaplains perform their own ‘theological’ reflection, making sense of their lives and work as chaplains. If we are to believe Clarke’s claim that “one can only

¹⁴² Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc., *APCE Standards & Manuals*, <http://www.manula.com/manuals/acpe/acpe-manuals/2016/en/topic/cover-page>.

go with another as far as one has gone with oneself,”¹⁴³ which I hold with some skepticism,¹⁴⁴ then we ourselves must be adept at making meaning from our own lives if we are to aid others in doing so as well.

Therefore, two of the primary questions in my research are, 1) how do Buddhist chaplains practice reflection and make meaning for themselves, and what impact does this have on their ability to provide spiritual care for others? And, 2) as they provide spiritual care for others, how do they approach the process of facilitating theological reflection with religiously diverse careseekers?

Given that most Buddhist chaplains, including the study participants, are practicing in a predominantly Christian nation in which, according to the Pew Forum, 89 percent of adults have some belief in God,¹⁴⁵ it is almost certain that they have facilitated actual theological (no ‘’) reflection with careseekers. How is this possible if, as Clarke asserts, we can only walk with careseekers where we have already been?

¹⁴³ Clarke, “Kalamitra,” 287.

¹⁴⁴ Given the vast diversity of human experience, if we can only walk with careseekers on paths we have ourselves already trod, then we may well be incapable of helping anyone significantly different from ourselves to any measurable degree. What do I know of being a sixty-year-old, black, lesbian, Christian woman from an abusive household who was raised in Brazil? Yet, if we rely on the shared experience of suffering in its most basic form, combined with an empathetic imagination, academic training, and acceptance of the careseeker as expert in her own life, then perhaps I can accompany her on an unfamiliar path, so long as I am willing to follow rather than lead. Clarke’s statement, while poetic and a worthwhile caution, is too simplistic to reveal the author’s opinion on the amount of affinity that must be present between careseeker and counselor for care to occur. Clarke follows his statement about one’s own experience with reference to “not knowing,” a basic Buddhist concept of holding an open mind, so he may very well understand this paradox.

¹⁴⁵ Pew Research Center, “Belief in God,” *Religious Landscape Study*, 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/belief-in-god/>.

In my experience, Buddhist chaplains endorse a number of beliefs about God, from self-described Buddhist/Christians like Bidwell, to Buddhists who equate God/divinity with ideas of emptiness or the cosmic Buddha, to hard-line Buddhist atheists who believe God is a harmful delusion to be shed on the path to liberation from suffering. The Pew Forum reports that at least 69 percent of the Buddhists in their survey expressed some belief in God, with the highest number of reported atheists (27 percent) aside from the religiously unaffiliated (i.e., “nones”).¹⁴⁶ However, even when Buddhists believe in God/gods/divinity, such concepts are not always integral to their spiritual practice or soteriological goals. How then can Buddhist chaplains walk with theistic believers in reflection? This research explores these very questions.

Buddhist chaplains are exposed to ‘theological’ reflection in several ways. They practice writing ‘theological’ reflections in graduate school and, more directly, in CPE, where such reflection is an expected part of the verbatim exercise. In addition, they practice such reflections during their training as Dharma teachers and clergy, though it is not called ‘theological’ reflection. Until this study, no scholarly publication has seriously interrogated whether ‘theological’ reflection is even an appropriate requirement or practice for a Buddhist chaplain.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Pew Research Center, “Belief in God.” Many scholars of Buddhism have criticized the Pew *Religious Landscape Survey*’s representation of Buddhism, due to the theistic normative assumptions embedded within the survey question language and the lack of Asian-language surveys, resulting in underrepresentation of a significant portion of American Buddhists. When belief in God is correlated to ethnicity, Asian respondents to the Pew survey had the lowest levels of belief (19 percent do not, 36 percent do somewhat, and 44 percent do with certainty, versus the average 9 percent who do not, 26 percent who do somewhat, and 63 percent who do with certainty). The Pew survey does inquire about the importance of religion in one’s life in relation to one’s belief in God (37 percent of adults for whom religion was not important at all do report at least some belief in God), but does not inquire about the importance of belief in God in one’s religion.

¹⁴⁷ At least, I could not find any examples of this question in the published literature. However, my study participants provide numerous examples of interrogating this question for themselves and, occasionally, with CPE supervisors and peers.

Nevertheless, Buddhist chaplains do engage in reflection, as the essays in *The Arts of Contemplative Care* ably demonstrate, when viewed through the lens of various ‘theological’ reflection methods,¹⁴⁸ as we shall see below. Study participants report a range of responses and views in relation to these practices, as we shall see in chapter four, but all reported engaging in them to at least some extent, and many reported facilitating such reflection for careseekers.

I will now attempt to define theological reflection and explore some of its methods. James and Evelyn Whitehead’s succinct definition states, “Theological reflection in ministry is the process of bringing to bear in the practical decisions of ministry the resources of Christian faith.”¹⁴⁹ If we were to broaden this definition to include the resources of Buddhist traditions, it could quite easily apply to Buddhist chaplains. Their book, *Methods in Ministry*, lays out a three-part model and a three-part method for doing just that.¹⁵⁰

The Whiteheads’ model draws on the “religious information” found in religious tradition, personal experience, and the “resources of culture” to address practical decisions and problems. Their method involves, first, attending to what is occurring and gathering information from each of the three aspects of the model. Much of this information is hidden or subconscious, absorbed uncritically from religious teachings and the dominant culture to color how one interprets one’s personal experiences. These unconscious assumptions must be brought forward into explicit consciousness to inform the second part of the method. Next, one clarifies one’s insight through dialogue, a stage the Whiteheads call “assertion.” The final part of their method is a pastoral

¹⁴⁸ Sanford, “Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist Spiritual Care.”

¹⁴⁹ James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry*, (Franklin, WI: Sheed & Ward, 1995), ix.

¹⁵⁰ Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*.

response in the form of individual or community action. Together, these three stages—attending, assertion, and action—make up the Whiteheads’ three-part model.

They posit a continuum of theological reflection from the extremely concrete and practical on one end, “in which reflection enjoys almost no role,” to a highly academic activity “so abstract that its religious import is all but indiscernible.” The Whiteheads situate the kind of reflection conducted in CPE in the former extreme and the work of academics such as Paul Tillich and David Tracy in the latter.¹⁵¹ The Whiteheads’ three-part method is surprisingly similar to the Three *Prajñās* Framework of listening, contemplating, and practicing. A comparison of the two can be found in chapter five.

Indeed, both Christian and Buddhist chaplains regularly engage in reflection, ranging from the pragmatic to the abstract. Kilts describes the more abstract extreme as a negative aspect of *vajra*, one of the five Buddha families, calling it “over-reliance on ‘heady’ or academic theology for reflection” that “leaves us capable of debate, but often lacking in an ability to reflect emotionally about what is happening in the ministry encounter.”¹⁵²

Blum’s Mindfulness Allies Project provides an example of the concrete extreme, a project designed to test interventions for individuals of low socioeconomic status and people of color to be able to access mindfulness training with allies. It focuses on testing extremely pragmatic interventions, including childcare and dinner, as well as teaching allies how to work with the topic of race and status when raised in discussion by participants. His reflection on this project focuses almost entirely on what worked and what did not, rather than on any theoretical questions.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, xi.

¹⁵² Kilts, “Vajrayana Buddhist Perspective on Ministry,” 279.

¹⁵³ Blum, “Mindfulness Equity and Western Buddhism,” 1-18.

These are only two examples of how the abstract and pragmatic both appear in Buddhist reflection. While ultimately practical, the Whiteheads' approach is just one among a panoply of Christian methods. According to J.R. Burck and R.J. Hunter, for Christians, "The exercise of theological reflection is thus one 'in which pastoral experience serves as a context for critical development of basic theological understanding.'"¹⁵⁴ In other words, doing and knowing are inextricably intertwined. 'Theological' reflection helps us know what we are doing and do what we know to be good in light of our religious traditions.

Another major contribution to the literature on theological reflection is a thorough typology of Christian methods compiled by Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward. Their book, *Theological Reflection: Methods*, summarizes seven common methods of theological reflection used by Christians and provides examples of each from early Christian history, through their development in the Modern period, and into their forms today.

The authors define theological reflection within the field of pastoral or practical theology as an "inductive" discipline, a "*process rather than a product*."¹⁵⁵ They provide a typology for 'theological' reflection, devoting one chapter of their book to each of the following seven methods: living human document, constructive narrative theology, canonical narrative theology, corporate theological reflection, correlation, praxis, and local or vernacular theologies.

Methods analogous to these, including praxis, correlation, and vernacular theologies, are employed by the Buddhist authors of *The Arts of Contemplative Care*.¹⁵⁶ Applying Graham,

¹⁵⁴ J.R. Burck and R.J. Hunter, "Pastoral Theology, Protestant," in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, ed. R. J. Hunter, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1990), 867, quoted in Elaine L. Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London: SCM Press, 2005), 6.

¹⁵⁵ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 2-6.

¹⁵⁶ Sanford, "Christian, Jewish, & Buddhist Spiritual Care."

Walton, and Ward's seven-part typology to the essays in this book reveals Buddhist chaplains reflecting on their work in ways similar to, but also distinct from, Christian methods.

The section below will provide an analysis of 'theological' reflection within *The Arts of Contemplative Care* using this typology, with additional consideration of some of the forces shaping how Buddhism is understood in the west drawn from David McMahan's *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*. Unfortunately, I do not have space here to cover all seven of Graham's methods, though I have no doubt this would be a worthy exercise. It is simply not the primary goal of this work to categorize Buddhist reflection according to Christian norms. This analysis is sufficient to demonstrate that both similarities and differences exist and chart their broad outlines.

The practice of 'theological' reflection may at first seem entirely foreign to Buddhism, especially given that each of the seven methods described in Graham, Walton, and Ward's book rely on God, Christ, and/or divine revelation in some form. However, if these terms are considered less in relation to divinity (forgive me) and more as sources of wisdom for the predicaments of human life, then comparisons can be made to the type of reflections Buddhists undertake on a regular basis. Naturally, some methods seem more suitable than others. In my survey of *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, I find numerous examples of the method Graham refers to as praxis, but few examples of canonical narrative theology. This does not mean Buddhists have no interest in how their identity—both individual and collective—is shaped by their scriptures; quite the contrary.¹⁵⁷ It only means this has not been emphasized by the western-

¹⁵⁷ In fact, the many sects of the Mahayana form their entire identities around precisely which text they take as most authoritative amongst a broad canon: for example, the Lotus Sutra among the Tiantai schools and the Diamond Sutra among the Chan schools. Also, the Asian use of Jataka tales, or stories of the Buddha's past lives as ethical and motivational allegories, is

based, highly educated, culturally pluralistic teachers and chaplains who contributed to Giles and Miller's anthology.

Praxis may be the method of 'theological' reflection most suited to Buddhists, who often use the term 'practice' in the same way Christians refer to their 'faith.' Graham briefly describes praxis as "theology-in-action" and highlights its social justice orientation, "Ushering creation toward an ultimate vision of redemption."¹⁵⁸

The Society of Friends, a Christian denomination also known as the Quakers, is a historical Christian example of this kind of praxis. The Quakers radically changed their approach to worship to emphasize "the immediacy of religious experience unmediated by ecclesial authority" and religious freedom in the service of personal integrity.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, Buddhists and Quakers share many affinities, including silent communal practice and the primacy of direct experience.

A contemporary example of praxis is the pastoral cycle of liberation that theologian Juan-Luis Segundo developed from Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics. The cycle involves experience, social analysis, theological reflection/hermeneutics, and pastoral planning and action, which generates a new immersive experience. The cycle rests on the assumption that each moment calls for reinterpretation of "the word of God."¹⁶⁰ Likewise, in Jewish theology, Myriam Klotz describes the process of wrestling with blessings "to find redemptive meaning and value in experience" and elucidates the practices of *teshuvah* (repentance), *tefilah* (prayer), and *tzedakah*

similar to canonical narrative theology. These forms may be absent from *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, due to its relative dearth of Asian and Asian-American authors.

¹⁵⁸ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 14.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 176-177.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 188-189

(good deeds) as orthopraxis in the face of suffering.¹⁶¹ These examples of praxis-based reflection have both similarities and differences to Buddhist praxis.

We find similar, but not identical, methods used by Giles, Kristin Deleo, Miller, and Steve Kanji Ruhl, among other authors, in *The Arts of Contemplative Care*. Giles in particular provides instruction on orthopraxis when she describes the five-fold training of Machig Lapdonma. She cites American Buddhist nun Pema Chödrön, who teaches that compassion is a method for dealing with our own strong emotions and other people's suffering. Giles summarizes Phadampa Sangye's instructions to Machig Lapdronma (through Chödrön's commentary) for cultivating compassion, particularly to overcome racism and other forms of prejudice. This fivefold training involves:

1. *Revealing our hidden faults* in order to notice when we perceive difference as negative, acknowledge our prejudices, work with uncomfortable feelings, and see how our story about ourselves is constantly changing.
2. *Approaching what we find repulsive* to explore our privilege, how we contribute to systemic injustice, and learn how our prejudices prevent compassion.
3. *Helping those we think we cannot help* by overcoming our fears of rejection, reaching out with love, caring about others' happiness even when we cannot always make them happy, and giving compassion freely, without judgment. Giles points out that opportunities to help others only arise when we are present with them in their pain.

¹⁶¹ Myriam Klotz, "Wresting Blessings: A Pastoral Response to Suffering," in *Jewish Pastoral Care: A Practical Handbook from Traditional & Contemporary Sources*, 2nd ed., ed. Dayle A. Freidman (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2013), 4-22.

4. *Letting go or giving away anything we are attached to*, including biased feelings, concepts, and ideas; our own privilege; and our deep subconscious egoic fears of others.
5. *Going to the places that scare us* and feeling what we've avoided feeling for years by being willing to cultivate fearlessness to sit with uncertainty, discomfort, and fear.¹⁶²

This teaching uses a method common in mind training, or *lojong* practices,¹⁶³ a reliance on and regular use of slogans during contemplative practice to reshape the mind and/or heart for work in the world. Through this practice, we strengthen our ability “to step into suffering with another [which] is perhaps our greatest act of kindness,” according to Carlyle Coash.¹⁶⁴

From this exploration, we can see quite a range of Buddhist views on compassion, as well as points of agreement and disagreement with Jewish, Christian, and psychological theories of empathy and compassion. Instructions such as, “Go to the places that scare you,” are intended to be practiced in our daily lives. Giles quotes Pema Chödrön, saying “Through continual practice we find out how to cross over the boundary between stuckness and waking up.” Giles applies this teaching to working with racism¹⁶⁵ within both the Buddhist community and American society in general, thus paralleling the social-justice focus of praxis.

Likewise, Willa Miller's presentation of Patrul Rinpoche's rules for listening assert that these methods of orthopraxis are cultivated over time in real human interactions and linked to

¹⁶² Cheryl A. Giles, “Beyond the Color Line: Cultivating Fearlessness in Contemplative Care,” in *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, ed. Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 46-52.

¹⁶³ See “*blo sbyong*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 126.

¹⁶⁴ Carlyle Coash, “Finding Acceptance at the Heart of Things,” in *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, ed. Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 263.

¹⁶⁵ Giles, “Beyond the Color Line,” 51.

meditation practice.¹⁶⁶ Miller, an American Buddhist lama in the Tibetan traditions, draws on the teachings of Patrul Rinpoche (1808-1887)¹⁶⁷ to describe three ways *not* to listen and three ways one *should* listen.

First, do not listen like an upside-down pot into which nothing new can be placed. That is, listen attentively without being distracted by judgments, feelings, obsessions, other sounds, or physical sensations. Value the speaker's words, cultivate curiosity, and let go of one's own need to be heard. Second, do not listen like a pot with holes that only catches some things, but not others. Listen to remember and understand, imagine what that situation must have been like, and empathize with the speaker. Miller describes this as "an *energy* of receptivity paired with willingness to feel with" the other and "come alongside" them. Finally, do not listen like a pot containing poison that contaminates anything put into it. Miller asserts that good listening comes from having the right motivation to listen, which, according to Patrul Rinpoche, means not wanting to "glorify oneself and vilify others." Become a selfless and nondual listener, totally absorbed in listening beyond self-consciousness of subject and object. This does not mean we forget ourselves, as we listen both to the careseeker and to how we are receiving their words to monitor for our own poisons, but that we do so with equanimous awareness.¹⁶⁸

Miller's description, based on this Nyingma master's teaching, shows striking resemblance to Howard Clinebell and Bridget Clare McKeever's description of active, empathic

¹⁶⁶ Willa B. Miller, "Thus I have Listened: A Reflection on Listening as Spiritual Care," in *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, ed. Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 284-290.

¹⁶⁷ See "Dpal sprul Rin po che" in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 268.

¹⁶⁸ Miller, "Thus I have Listened," 284-290.

listening used to understand and overcome one's own blind spots and obsessions.¹⁶⁹ It also follows Robert Kidd's instruction to stay attuned to the present¹⁷⁰ and Barbara Breitman's concern that the caregiver should receive the careseeker's message accurately and take it into their heart.¹⁷¹

Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist caregivers all agree on the importance of listening as a primary skill for chaplains. Miller's chapter aligns with Graham, Walton, and Ward's description of praxis inasmuch as she emphasizes the Patrul Rinpoche's teaching as one of "performative knowledge"—there is no true knowing apart from doing.¹⁷² It fully expresses the Buddhist understanding of *prajñā* as being akin to gnosis, an embodied wisdom that "cannot be perceived by the intellect,"¹⁷³ but only performed by the one who possesses it, in the manner of orthopraxis.

Steve Kanji Ruhl's chapter tends to conform to the manner of local theology, being a memoir of some of his experiences as a "foreigner" Zen Buddhist at seminary among "local" Christian students and dealing with the tension this created between tradition (Zen)¹⁷⁴ and what Graham calls the "immediacy of experience."¹⁷⁵ However, he also offers a glimpse of reflection

¹⁶⁹ Howard Clinebell and Bridget Clare McKeever, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 3rd ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2011), 70-74.

¹⁷⁰ Kidd, "Foundational Listening and Responding Skills," 93-94.

¹⁷¹ Barbara Eve Breitman, "Foundations of Jewish Pastoral Care: Skills and Techniques," in *Jewish Pastoral Care: A Practical Handbook from Traditional & Contemporary Sources*, 2nd Edition, ed. Dayle A. Freidman (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2013), 98-101.

¹⁷² Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 175

¹⁷³ His Holiness The Dalai Lama, *Flash of Lightning in the Dark of Night: A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1992), 118-119.

¹⁷⁴ Steve Kanji Ruhl, "Report from the Field: Being an American Zen Buddhist Minister," in *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, ed. Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 301-303.

¹⁷⁵ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 226.

on praxis when he says, “When I begin a session of pastoral counseling, I recall to myself that the person in front of me has the inner ability and wisdom to work with their problems,” an insight regularly affirmed through his practice of spiritual care.¹⁷⁶

From these few examples, we can already see the shape of the praxis method emerging from Buddhist reflection, with its emphasis on action, assumption that insight is gained from direct experience in addition to scripture, descriptions of orthopraxis leading to liberation, and “solidarity with the suffering of the world.”¹⁷⁷ It diverges from Christian methods inasmuch as it does not seek a final redemptive end for the world, nor does it rely on divine revelation or seek to enact God’s will in the world.

Another method of ‘theological’ reflection with a surprisingly long tradition within Buddhism is correlation. The authors describe correlation as “speaking of God in public” via a dialogue between religious tradition, secular science, and popular culture. This method assumes that various human endeavors beyond theology can “offer raw material for divine disclosure.”¹⁷⁸

The authors cite Friedrich Schleiermacher, the Modern founder of practical theology, as an advocate of this method. Schleiermacher was, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, deeply influenced by empirical science and Romanticism, both of which looked to experience (though in entirely different ways, i.e., the empiricism and observation of science and the interior felt perceptions of Romanticism) for their insights.¹⁷⁹ More contemporary examples of this method include Paul Tillich, Seward Hiltner, and David Tracy.

¹⁷⁶ Ruhl, “Report from the Field,” 304.

¹⁷⁷ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 14.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 148-149.

Hiltner popularized the use of correlation among pastoral theologians when comparing Christian teaching to psychological findings.¹⁸⁰ We see this legacy in Clinebell and McKeever's influential pastoral care textbook, where they draw on the work of Carl Rogers and rely on best practices from the social sciences for guidance on addiction treatment, trauma care, mental health referrals, and so on.¹⁸¹ He also cautions against psychological professionals who tend to reduce all spiritual issues to psychology.¹⁸² Jewish caregivers such as Breitman rely on theories of transference and countertransference, while augmenting them with insights particular to spiritual communities or spiritual authority figures.¹⁸³ Both Clinebell and Breitman demonstrate the two-way street of mutual critical correlation, using and critiquing the social sciences as needed.

According to David McMahan, in *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, Buddhism has engaged in some form of correlation since its earliest introduction to modern Western audiences. In fact, Buddhism positioned itself in relation to science and Modernism the same way Schleiermacher positioned himself to science and Romanticism. On the one hand, Buddhist teachers often presented their traditions as being in accord with science, a “scientific religion,”¹⁸⁴ or as their own “science of the mind”¹⁸⁵ or “inner science,”¹⁸⁶ yet they were also critical of science. According to McMahan, “While they asserted that Buddhism was in harmony with

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 154-161.

¹⁸¹ Clinebell and McKeever, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 3rd ed., 393-396.

¹⁸² Ibid., 220.

¹⁸³ Breitman, “Foundations of Jewish Pastoral Care,” 115-116.

¹⁸⁴ Per the first American to convert to Buddhism, Henry Steel Olcott, who later had troubles of his own as he tried to impose his unexamined normative assumptions (specifically regarding Protestantization) on Buddhism. McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 101.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 113.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 207.

science, Modernists often expressed dissatisfaction with the dehumanizing, mechanistic, and instrumentalist approach to science.”¹⁸⁷ During the Victorian “crisis of faith,” with which Schleiermacher also grappled, Buddhism positioned itself alongside science partly in order to assert its legitimacy or even its superiority to the Christianity of colonizers and missionaries in Asia, thus gaining important patrons and legal protections.¹⁸⁸

This alignment continues today through institutions such as the Dalai Lama’s Mind and Life Institute, which convenes gatherings of neuroscientists and psychologists with Buddhist scholars and practitioners primarily around a shared interest in the effects of contemplative practice.¹⁸⁹ The contributors to *The Arts of Contemplative Care* exhibit ambivalence toward science, at once recognizing that it “cannot cure all things,” while also relying on it to prove the fruits of meditation practice to skeptical audiences.¹⁹⁰ Buddhism remains in dialogue with science, to correlate scientific and social scientific insights with Buddhist insights and to critique both the tradition and the secular sciences.

The second force of Modernism that Buddhism aligned itself with was Romanticism. Here, the correlation was with a major cultural, artistic, and literary movement. It is in this context that McMahan draws parallels directly between Schleiermacher’s influence and how Buddhism was presented to and adapted by western audiences. McMahan points out, “The western metaphysic that most frequently became hybridized with Buddhism (as well as other

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 74.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 110-113.

¹⁸⁹ Mind and Life Institute, <https://www.mindandlife.org/>.

¹⁹⁰ Kristin Deleo, “Being a Compassionate Presence: The Contemplative Approach to End-of-Life Care,” in *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, ed. Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 245-246.

Asian religions) is derived largely from some German Romantics...including Shiller, Schleiermacher, Fichte, Herder, and Hegel.”¹⁹¹

In fact, “Schleiermacher’s famous discussion of the essence of religion” formed “an important part of the background of the development of Buddhist modernism.” In other words, Buddhism could be accepted among theocentric western audiences as a legitimate world religion partly because Schleiermacher had already redefined just what the quintessence of religion was or did. The resulting hybridization also represents the movement of Buddhism into a “theology of the vernacular” as the Dharma found “expression across cultural differences” by adapting to the host language. Buddhism also found within Romantic writing and art “legitimate raw material” for ‘theological’ reflection.¹⁹²

Graham, Walton, and Ward point out that during the process of the local theologies method, “Something like a correlational or dialogical process needs to take place.”¹⁹³ This enabled Buddhism to correlate its insights and align itself with Romantics such as Herder and Schelling and later, Transcendentalists, such as Wordsworth, Rousseau, and Emerson.¹⁹⁴ Buddhist teachers like Dwight Goddard, D.T. Suzuki, and the Beat poets would later cash in this cultural capital to popularize Buddhism in the twentieth century.¹⁹⁵ McMahan cites Lin Jensen, one of the contributors to *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, as a contemporary example of this tradition.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 77.

¹⁹² Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 14.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 227.

¹⁹⁴ McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 76-81.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 81-84.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 84.

Jensen, for her contribution to Giles and Miller's anthology, uses a method similar to Graham, Walton, and Ward's "theology by heart," which relies on Anton Boisen's "living human document" model. This model "speak[s] through the interiority of human experience" for "theological reflection and construction." Jensen documents various encounters with careseekers and family members to explore the theme of Right Speech, drawing more 'theological' insights from her life than from Buddhist scripture and even managing to quote George Orwell in what is possibly another example of correlation.¹⁹⁷

Jensen's essay in *The Arts of Contemplative Care* explores Right Speech in relation to religious prayers and rituals when the caregiver does not hold the same beliefs as the careseeker. She equates speaking in contradiction of what one personally believes with "lying."¹⁹⁸ However, it appears that Jensen is conflating her own personal belief with verifiable truth. Therefore, praying for someone to go to heaven is a "lie," because she does not believe in heaven, not because she can prove heaven does not exist.

My classmates in the Buddhist chaplaincy master's program also wrestled with this issue. The accommodation I ultimately found, described below, is quite different from Jensen's, who concludes it is acceptable to lie—contradicting the Buddha's own teaching on the topic, which she references—when it is of benefit to the careseeker and when one's heart "consents."¹⁹⁹ She neglects the Buddha's own practice of teaching according to the needs of the audience, including some instances where he taught about the self in seeming contradiction to the doctrine of

¹⁹⁷ Lin Jensen, "Wrong Speech: Knowing When It's Best to Lie," in *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, ed. Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 291-299.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 291-294.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 294-295.

nonself.²⁰⁰ Jensen relies on herself as a living human document and interprets the lives and needs of her careseekers as living human documents, a skill that, as a Buddhist chaplain in a medical setting, she may very well have learned from a predominantly Christian CPE program. Thus, we can also see overtones of the vernacular coming to influence the ways Buddhist reflection has developed in the U.S.

In contrast to Jensen, I conclude that Right Speech includes statements such as, “May you find peace in Christ,” because it is an honest wish. I do not believe it is likely that the historical man called Jesus Christ was the son of God, but in that moment, I can hope for the careseeker’s sake that he is God incarnate and capable of granting lasting peace. I can live in this as-if hope for a moment by practicing another Zen skill: not-knowing.²⁰¹ Other Zen writers from *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, including Mikel Monnett and Steve Kanji Ruhl, describe the function of “not-knowing” in their caregiving practice, but Jensen does not, despite also being a Zen practitioner.

I do not *believe* in Christ, but I do not *know* for certain, either; I hold what I think I know lightly and remember all that I do not know and all that is beyond conventional knowing. In my own Buddhist worldview, certain knowledge is unattainable apart from total, complete enlightenment, which, among other things, is understood as the complete apprehension of reality as it is and occasionally characterized by omniscience, depending on the tradition.

²⁰⁰ For some examples of how the Buddha tailored his message to his audience, see, “Befriending the Suttas: Tips on Reading the Pali Discourses,” *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, last modified November 30, 2013,” <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/befriending.html>.

²⁰¹ For a brief description of “not-knowing,” see Gil Fronsedale, “Not-Knowing,” *Insight Meditation Center*, accessed February 10, 2004, <http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/books-articles/articles/not-knowing/>.

My criteria for Right Speech in these situations are very simple: 1) it is possibly true, and 2) it reduces suffering or increases comfort and joy. In this sense, I also practice ‘theology’ of the heart, as described by Graham, Walton, and Ward, and treat my own life and experiences of prayer as a living human document. This is an area where Buddhists could do some deeper ‘theological’ digging, as we shall see among the study participants’ own attempts to grapple with the interfaith nature of prayer in healthcare settings. I predict our conclusions as to proper caregiving responses will align closely with Christian and Jewish guidelines, though perhaps for different reasons.

I share this personal reflection to highlight another area of alignment between Buddhist and Christian ‘theological’ reflection: Buddhist not-knowing, or beginner’s mind, and Christian *docta ignorantia*, or “knowing unknowing.” Duane Bidwell describes the latter as a situation wherein spiritual caregivers “have knowledge of God and the spiritual journey but cannot guess how to create spiritual growth or healing or even know for certain what parishioners experience in a particular situation.”²⁰² As Clarke, Monnett, and Ruhl note, it is not-knowing that enables Buddhist chaplains not merely to practice reflection and make sense from their own experiences, but, more critically, to maintain the basic openness necessary to facilitate theological reflection for careseekers as the chaplaincy standards for professional practice require. Bidwell brings this to bear in a Christian context, encouraging the ‘not knowing’ attitude as one that allows the Holy Spirit to serve as the true caregiver.

The remainder of Bidwell’s chapter in *Strategies for Brief Pastoral Counseling* provides clear guidance and several methods for facilitating theological reflection with Protestant

²⁰² Duane Bidwell, “Collaborating with the Spirit: Brief Spiritual Direction in Congregational Ministry,” in *Strategies for Brief Pastoral Counseling*, ed. Howard W. Stone (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 127.

careseekers that could be easily adapted to other settings, including working with everyday life, focusing on possibilities (as I frequently do in my prayers to God on behalf of careseekers), tailoring care to the individual (including their preferred nomenclature for the divine and method of prayer), encouraging perseverance, opening contemplative space (through both prayer and meditation), identifying exceptions, deconstructing underlying assumptions, drawing out priorities and helping careseekers live by them, hearing confession (formally and informally), writing letters of encouragement and reminder, and guiding visualizations (also a potential aspect of prayer and meditation).²⁰³ While Bidwell's underlying framework is clearly theistic, none of these strategies rely on a theistic worldview or on a precise correspondence between the worldview of the caregiver and careseeker. They remain accessible to Buddhist caregivers because careseekers "are experts about their own lives," and through not-knowing, we enable an attitude of respectful curiosity that emphasizes the careseeker's own worldview, strengths, resources, and goals.²⁰⁴

Madeline Ko-I Bastis's various books, articles, and chapters provide an interesting glimpse of many methods for reflection. Her first short article on "Thom's Garden" is a lovely example of "theology by heart" or Boisen's "living human document." Although it lacks an "intimate relation with God"²⁰⁵ or any explicit mention of the Dharma, it clearly describes a close relationship between a careseeker and caregiver, and for a Buddhist reader, it points directly to impermanence,²⁰⁶ one of the three hallmarks of existence. Bastis's chapter on prayer, outlined above, is an example of reflection through correlation; Bastis correlated Buddhist

²⁰³ Ibid., 128-138.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 126-127.

²⁰⁵ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods*, 18.

²⁰⁶ Bastis, "Thom's Garden."

devotional practices both with science and with theistic devotional practices, particularly Larry Dossey's definition of prayer as "communication with the Absolute."²⁰⁷ While Buddhists and Christians may have very different ideas of the "Absolute" and its soteriological significance, the practice of mental devotion is an effective coping mechanism employed by both traditions.

From this brief and very unsystematic review, I conclude that Buddhist spiritual caregivers do indeed engage in 'theological' reflection using many of the same methods as Christian and Jewish caregivers. The difference lies, I believe, in attribution. Whereas a theist may construct theology from human experience on the basis of God's immanence, a Buddhist may do likewise on the basis of the buddha-nature within all people. Whereas a Christian may see praxis as the conversation between secular culture and divine revelation, a Buddhist may see it as the dialogical relationship between culture and the universal Dharma.

Due to these differences in theoretical understanding, I believe Buddhist reflection has and will continue develop its own unique methods. For example, Buddhist hermeneutics²⁰⁸ and Buddhist psychology²⁰⁹ (separate from western psychology) are already fully-fledged disciplines, which, unfortunately, I do not have the time to examine here. They are also at work in the chapters of *The Arts of Contemplative Care*. However, while I can say with certainty that reflection is occurring, there is, as of yet, no literature detailing its shape and process.

This study of Buddhist reflection methods determines where Buddhist chaplains derive their processes, methods, and sources for reflexive practices. But how do Buddhists learn to

²⁰⁷ Bastis, "A Buddhist Response to Larry Dossey," 87-92.

²⁰⁸ See, for example: Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Buddhist Hermeneutics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988).

²⁰⁹ See, for example: Epstein, *Thoughts Without a Thinker*; Mark Epstein, *Going on Being: Life at the Crossroads of Buddhism and Psychotherapy* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2008); and Jack Kornfield, *The Wise Heart: A Guide to the Universal Teachings of Buddhist Psychology* (New York: Bantam Books, 2008).

make meaning from/of/about their spiritual care practice, and how does it affect their ability to offer effective care? How do they facilitate theological reflection for careseekers? There is an opportunity here for continuing analytical and constructive scholarly work.

Comparative ‘Theology’

Comparing emergent themes within the data with existing Christian methods of ‘theological’ reflection may serve as a useful heuristic, but it is not the goal of the study. Comparing religions has a long history and flows between the related disciplines of world religions, comparative religions, comparative theology, and theologies of religion. These disciplines each have related benefits and dangers. Several authors point to the history of distorted Othering and the dangerously essentializing dichotomy of so-called East versus West.²¹⁰

While authors such as Francis X. Clooney, Kristin Beise Kiblinger, and others attempt to resolve these distortions through a critique of comparative theological methods, Hugh Nicholson sees the entire enterprise as “inevitably antagonistic” due to irresolvable exclusive claims.²¹¹

Meanwhile, Paul Knitter (another self-described Buddhist-Christian)²¹² and James Fredericks see eastern religions as bearing insights capable of enriching Christian theology and

²¹⁰ See, for example, Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 14-21; and Francis X. Clooney, “Introduction,” in *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights from the Next Generation*, ed. Francis X. Clooney (New York: T&T Clark International 2010), ix-xx.

²¹¹ Hugh Nicholson, “The New Comparative Theology and the Problem of Theological Hegemonism,” in *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights from the Next Generation*, ed. Francis X. Clooney (New York: T&T Clark International, 2010), 43-62.

²¹² Paul F. Knitter, “Toward a Liberation Theology of Religion,” in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, ed. John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), 178-200.

orthopraxis. Some Buddhist scholars, such as Judith Simmer-Brown, have echoed this sentiment in the opposite direction.²¹³ Fredericks, in *Faith among Faiths*, states that comparative theologies, such as Knitter's, can provide a way through and extols the "Christian theologians [who] are beginning to study the teaching and practices of non-Christian religions seriously...to return to their own religious tradition with new insights and questions...to think about Christianity in new and exciting ways."²¹⁴

Kenneth Inada and Nolan Jacobson document some of this trend in their work, *Buddhism and American Thinkers*, which links Buddhist concepts such as *anatta* (non-self) and *nirvāṇa* with American academics such as William James and Alfred North Whitehead.²¹⁵ Fredericks exemplifies this trend in another work, *Buddhists and Christians*, in which he compares Nagarjuna and Thomas Aquinas in order to "do Christian theology, not to compare Christianity and Buddhism" objectively.²¹⁶ Scottish-born and Oxford- and Yale-educated scholar Ninian Smart contends that Buddhism and Christianity are complementary, both critiquing the other in useful ways,²¹⁷ though this is not my purpose in this study. My comparison of Buddhist reflection to Christian methods is primarily to do Buddhist 'theology,' not for the sake of comparison itself. As a Buddhist, I proceed far more cautiously in my endeavor than my

²¹³ Judith Simmer-Brown, "Christian Views: A Response," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 17 (1997): 152-158.

²¹⁴ James L. Fredericks, *Faith among Faiths: Christian Theology and Non-Christian Religions* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 10-11.

²¹⁵ Kenneth K. Inada and Nolan Pliny Jacobson, *Buddhism and American Thinkers* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984), ix-xv.

²¹⁶ James L. Fredericks, *Buddhists and Christians: Through Comparative Theology to Solidarity* (New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 98.

²¹⁷ Ninian Smart, *Buddhism and Christianity: Rivals and Allies* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), 99-101.

Christian counterparts, because I am aware of how Christian and western privilege may bias my viewpoints.²¹⁸

One may assume that Buddhists the world over would be eager to study non-Buddhist religions and return to their *sanghas* with new insights and questions, as Knitter and Fredericks do for Christians. Many Buddhist scholars (who are largely western-trained) have done so through the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies and its associated journal. However, in their book, *Christianity and Buddhism*, Whalen Lai and Michael Von Brück demonstrate that this has not historically been the case for Dharma communities and teachers. Lai and Brück state, “The basic assumption of most Buddhists of all schools [is] that Buddhism is self-sufficient and needs interreligious dialogue for practical and political reasons.”²¹⁹ In other words, Buddhists (in general) do not seek insight from other religious traditions in order to critique or inform the Dharma. I consider myself operating under this assumption; I am in dialogue with Christian theology for practical and political reasons, not to critique or inform Buddhist practices, even in relation to the historically Christian-dominated profession of chaplaincy. David McMahan summarizes these practical and political reasons in detail in *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*.²²⁰

²¹⁸ This need not be the same in reverse. A well noted function of privilege (whether gender, racial, socioeconomic, or religious) is that majority viewpoints are not necessarily pressured to conform to minority worldviews. However, members of the minority are continuously normed and norming (consciously or not) against majority perspectives.

²¹⁹ Whalen Lai and Michael Von Brück, *Christianity and Buddhism: A Multi-Cultural History of Their Dialogue* (New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 252-253.

²²⁰ McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*.

Scholars such as McMahan, Inada and Nolan,²²¹ and Bernard Faure²²² document how Buddhism has been mistranslated, misinterpreted, and misrepresented throughout history in western thought and scholarship. Richard Payne brings this argument home in relation to the contested term Buddhist ‘theology.’²²³

The translation/interpretation between Buddhist and other worldviews is not always easy; thus, the urgent need for original scholarly work on Buddhist approaches to traditionally non-Buddhist roles, such as chaplaincy. These difficulties are exacerbated by the selective history of Buddhist-Christian dialogue, which has largely focused on the intellectual comparison of ideas and concepts of interest to religious studies scholars (the Whiteheads’ abstract extreme).²²⁴

Lai and Brück note the “shortcoming” of dialogue between partners who lack ties to and responsibilities toward lineages and *sanghas*. I believe, if anything, they understate the danger when one considers that even the eastern representatives in this encounter are largely western-born, -raised, and -educated. They are generally products of the field of religious studies, which was invented by and for Christians and only lately applied to eastern religions (for which, in order to include them, they had to redefine the word “religion”). Lai and Brück assert, “Dialogue must go beyond intellectual understanding and encourage participation in the spiritual praxis of

²²¹ Inada and Jacobson, *Buddhism and American Thinkers*, xv.

²²² Bernard Faure, *Unmasking Buddhism* (Chicester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009); and Bernard Faure, *Double Exposure: Cutting Across Buddhist and Western Discourses*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).

²²³ Payne, “Why ‘Buddhist Theology’ is Not a Good Idea,” 37-72.

²²⁴ Take, for example, the early work of the Abe-Cobb dialogue group of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies, as documented by Rita Gross, “The International Buddhist-Christian Theological Encounter: Twenty Years of Dialogue,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 25 (2005): 3-7.

the other,”²²⁵ much as chaplains are called on to do and this research, at least in part, intends to document (the Whiteheads’ more concrete extreme).

One helpful framework in this conversation is Perry Schmidt-Leukel’s “fractal” theory of religious pluralism. Schmidt-Leukel uses the mathematical concept of the fractal as a metaphor for diversity both within and between religions. Fractals demonstrate both recursiveness and scale invariance; that is, any part of the whole is similar or identical to the whole itself.²²⁶ There are many examples of fractals in nature, the fern leaf being one of the most beautiful. Schmidt-Leukel builds on a similar strand of thought from philosopher Hajime Nakamura’s intercultural comparative history of ideas. Nakamura found that many human societies grapple with vary similar concerns. Schmidt-Leukel concludes:

A fractal interpretation of religious diversity proposes that the differences that can be observed at the *interreligious level* are, to some extent, reflected at the *intrareligious level* in the internal differences within the major religious tradition, and that they can be broken down at the *intrasubjective level* into different religious patterns and structures of the individual mind.²²⁷

In other words, within a religion such as Buddhism, one will find features that look more like Christianity than like other forms of Buddhism. For example, Pure Land worship of the Amitabha Buddha as being capable of saving suffering beings through the power of his vow upon hearing the recitation of his name, irrespective of other personal qualities or deeds, has often been compared to the Christian doctrine of salvation through grace alone. Likewise, within Christianity, one will find features that look more like Buddhism than like other forms of Christianity, as in the example of the silent contemplative group, the Quakers.

²²⁵ Lai and Von Brück, *Christianity and Buddhism*, 252-253.

²²⁶ Perry Schmidt-Leukel, *Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Theology: The Gifford Lectures—An Extended Edition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017), 223.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 233.

This also helps explain why some Buddhist reflection methods look like Christian methods, while still being native to Buddhism. The intrareligious diversity of Buddhism or Christianity is at least as vast as the interreligious diversity between the two religions. This is partly due to the intrasubjective diversity of the human mind, which Buddhism has often affirmed in its reliance on paradox as being critical for Buddhist teachings, such as the Two Truths and the doctrine of emptiness (explored more in chapter five).

Schmidt-Leukel uses the parable of the blind men and the elephant to explain how Buddhism has traditionally approached the question of religious diversity and then explores obstacles to religious diversity in Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhism in more detail,²²⁸ which I will not summarize here. These issues will reoccur in chapter four, as study participants grapple with the religious diversity of careseekers in interfaith settings.

There are several ethical dimensions to my work in relation to comparative theology. First, I must document and account for my own “naïve presuppositions”²²⁹ going in both directions: as a western-born, post-Christian scholar with embedded Protestant assumptions and as a practicing Buddhist with only an intellectual grasp of Christian theology. My commitments to Buddhism entail both an authentic presentation and a critical view of my own tradition.

Second, one cannot merely view Buddhist reflection through existing Christian lenses. The history of Buddhist-Christian dialogue is filled with entirely unnecessary attempts to equate or compare God-based concepts to the Dharma, rather than understanding Buddhism on its own terms.²³⁰ Many of the participants in this study grappled with this bias in their CPE cohorts, as

²²⁸ Ibid., 71-89.

²²⁹ Clooney, “Introduction,” xvi.

²³⁰ Perhaps the reverse is also true, but due to Christian hegemony in the West (where most of the dialogue takes place), this is far less evident. For more examples of this, see Payne, “Why ‘Buddhist Theology’ is Not a Good Idea,” 37-72.

shall be explored further in chapter four. These conversations are red herrings that prevent Buddhism from fully explicating its nontheocentric wisdom.

Third, I must declare my stance toward comparative theology as primarily political and pragmatic. I do not primarily seek insight into Buddhism from beyond Buddhism.²³¹ While Buddhist chaplains have learned much from Christian chaplains, we should not uncritically adopt their spiritual care and counseling methods and practices wholesale. Likewise, we cannot summarily dismiss them as inapplicable due to basic theistic assumptions and orientations. Rather, we must develop our own frameworks, typologies, theories, and terms in relation to our work as chaplains, while remaining alert for accidental linguistic colonization or the reshaping of fundamental Buddhist concepts through translation/interpretation into more easily recognized discipline-specific terms. Only after we have documented, described, and interpreted Buddhist chaplaincy in Buddhist ways can we then begin the grueling work of effectively translating it for our CPE supervisors, cohorts, and board certifiers. While doing so, we must highlight both the similarities and the differences.

Fourth, we must cope with Ricoeur's "work of mourning" and relinquish attachments to our own worldviews to make room to think in the language of the "Other." One of the practical goals of comparing the results of this research to Christian methods of theological reflection is to aid Buddhists in mastering the language used by Christian CPE supervisors to speak about reflection. Yet at the same time, we must also let go of "our desire for complete agreement with the guest,"²³² or the desire to receive complete understanding from our CPE supervisor, cohort,

²³¹ Though I do not rule it out.

²³² James Taylor, "Hospitality as Translation," in *Hosting the Stranger Between Religions*, ed. Richard Kearney and James Taylor (New York: Continuum, 2011), 11-22.

certifiers, or theistic colleagues. This desire often manifests in uncritical compromises in how we explicate the Dharma, as documented by McMahan.²³³ Finding the proper balance in the translation of Buddhist concepts into a Christian worldview²³⁴ has ethical implications for authenticity, integrity, and egolessness.

Fredericks recommends the approach of comparative theology as “resistant” to these dangers and advocates for a complete understanding of religious diversity in the spirit of David Tracy prior to any such interpretation. Moreover, he advocates for a comparative theology that is “attentive to the hegemony of [Christian] discourse” and the “post-modern condition.” Comparative theology then holds in tension “fidelity” to the home tradition and “vulnerability” to the capital-O “Other.” Although, speaking as the “Other” being referenced, the notion that Christians, powerful in their hegemony in the west, feel vulnerable to the very religious Others their hegemony is reshaping, is quite an interesting notion.

Despite these ethical concerns, a heuristic comparison of Buddhist reflexivity and Christian methods of theological reflection can still prove fruitful, as documented by this research, even if the conclusions are that Buddhist reflective practices are entirely unlike Christian practices. Though I suspect there is more similarity than difference between the two, this must be demonstrated by the data, which I explore in the following chapters.

Conclusion

I have described the lack of literature on Buddhist chaplaincy with a sense that this characterization is somewhat disingenuous. Truthfully, there is a lack of academic literature on

²³³ McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 118.

²³⁴ James L. Fredericks, “Introduction,” in *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights from the Next Generation*, ed. Francis X. Clooney (London: T & T Clark, 2010), ix-xx.

Buddhist chaplaincy that fits neatly into the categories of the western disciplines of spiritual/pastoral care as defined primarily by non-Buddhists. However, when we expand our viewpoint to see what Buddhist literature is relevant to Buddhist chaplains, we are inundated with rich works from experienced masters, both ancient and contemporary. The problem is not a lack of literature. The problem is an overabundance of literature that has yet to be distilled for its salient points in relation to the new context in which Buddhists who wish to be professional spiritual caregivers find themselves working. The problem is also a scholarly apparatus that excludes many of the most profound Buddhist works on the topic as insufficiently academic or simply too “general.” Entire genres of Buddhist literature on wisdom and compassion fall into this exclusion zone.

This, as Richard Payne warns, is one of the dangers of comparative “theology.” In seeking to produce a work under the heading of Buddhist “practical theology,” I may inadvertently give the impression that Buddhist thought falls neatly into various categories of ‘theology’ that are analogous to Christian ones, such as systematic theology, liberation theology, etc. Indeed, other scholars have compared socially engaged Buddhist with liberation theology.²³⁵ However, correlations between certain areas of Christian theology and Buddhist thought should not be taken to imply an overall structural parallel between the two. Indeed, attempts to make Buddhism fit into Christian paradigms tend to go awry, starting with the very first attempts by colonial explorers to classify Buddhism as either a religion or a philosophy (resulting in an expansion of the very definition of religion throughout western dictionaries).

²³⁵ This was the topic of various papers presented at the meeting of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Dialogue at the American Academy of Religions National Conference in San Diego in 2015 and the subject of the following issue of the *Journal for Buddhist-Christian Studies* 36 (2016), <http://muse.jhu.edu/issue/35111>.

In the following chapters, I primarily refer to the first four works summarized in this literature review (Kilts, Clarke, Simmer-Brown, and Giles and Miller), as they are the most immediately relevant to the data. However, I also found myself obliged to do a second literature review, drawing on wisdom from the vast field of Buddhist thought either considered non-academic or, more often, too general for inclusion in the original literature review. In this activity, I was fortunate to find a massive literature on the Buddhist topics relevant to the data, primarily the Three *Prajñās* and *kalyāṇamitra*. Moreover, this literature is just the tip of the iceberg. I was only able to access English-language sources, while the literature available to Buddhism as a whole exists in dozens of Asian languages, both ancient and modern. Thus, establishing the scholarly genre of Buddhist spiritual care will be more like a treasure hunt than an invention. I, for one, look forward to the journey.

Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter outlines the process I used to conduct this qualitative study in respect to practical theology and constructivist grounded theory. Practical theology guided the goals and overall shape of this study, so it is important to define the role of practical theology—a Christian discipline—in the study of Buddhist spiritual care, including its advantages and limitations. In addition, constructivist grounded theory guided the process of collecting and analyzing interviews and written reflections for the purpose of theory-building from the “ground” of the data. This method is described, including the development of grounded theory, its purposes, variations in its use and methods, and why I made particular methodological choices toward the constructivist type. As mentioned in chapter one, I find affinities between constructivist grounded theory and the *Buddhadharma*, which I briefly expand upon in this chapter.

I describe how the thirteen research participants were recruited, their demographics, and the nature of their participation, as well as how data was collected from the participants and analyzed using an iterative process of collection and analysis. Interviews were transcribed into text. Written reflections were also collected from participants.

This textual data pool, which includes interviews, written reflections, and follow-up interviews, was subjected to several rounds of coding and analysis. I describe the coding process, then the outcomes of this process in the form of the most prominent codes. Codes are listed, defined, described, and grouped in relation to other codes. This chapter does not provide an exhaustive list or analysis of all codes that appeared in the data (see Appendix A). Theoretical sampling was used in collecting data; that is, coding and analysis of earlier interviews guided the focus of later interviews in order to generate a clear picture of prominent themes in the data.

This chapter only briefly describes how, through meticulous memoing, this process led to a series of theories and hypotheses, then the theoretical framework and thesis. These topics are

further explored in chapters four and five, respectively. Finally, this chapter concludes with a description of how data saturation was achieved and how follow-up interviews were used to validate both the hypotheses (see chapter four) and the theoretical framework (see chapter five).

The Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care emerged following the third round of analytical coding, during the follow-up interviews. It is a result of exploring trends in the data from the thirteen initial interviews and eleven written reflections and the analysis of thematic codes, process and values codes, focused coding, and responses to the five hypotheses from the first three follow-up interviews. The final two follow-up interviews also enabled me to collect data in relation to the five hypotheses, and I presented the Three *Prajñās* Framework in its first draft for feedback. Both participants validated the Framework. The Framework was then used to generate a set of codes that were applied to all data collected to date and the codes were analyzed for their validity. Through this process, the Three *Prajñās* Framework of listening-contemplating-practicing in its four stages—self, student, chaplain, and spiritual friend—was both developed and validated using constructivist grounded theory.

Chaplains (and chaplain interns) who developed wisdom through more listening-contemplating-practicing at the stages of self, student, and chaplain more frequently reported accompanying careseekers in reflection as a spiritual friend and reported doing so in more detail. In particular, the second stage (student) emerged from the data as an important foundation for the latter two stages. In some cases, participants' experiences during this stage predicated their ability to accompany others as a spiritual friend (fourth stage) even more than their experiences during CPE (third stage).

These conclusions are, of course, tentative, as the thirteen research subjects in this study in no way represent the total population of practicing Buddhist chaplains and chaplains-in-

training. These findings and their limitations will be described in more detail in chapter four. In this chapter, I focus on the development of the data and code sets upon which the findings are based.

Practical Theology

How is this work practical ‘theology?’ Bonnie Miller-McLemore’s seminal definition of practical theology in the *Encyclopedia of Religion in America* covers four categories: 1) the religious “activity of believers” in everyday life, 2) an area of the curriculum in training religious professionals, 3) an approach used in the curriculum by religious leaders, teachers, and students, and 4) an academic discipline by scholars sustaining the first three parts.²³⁶ In other words, practical theology is concerned with daily activity, an area of the curriculum, an approach to study, and a supporting academic discipline.

This study falls into the fourth category as a scholarly work that documents and informs the practice of Buddhist chaplains providing spiritual care in their daily work-life (type one), with strong implications for how those chaplains are educated and trained (type two) and the approaches they do and will continue to use in their practice of spiritual care (type three). Under the fourth category, Miller-McLemore has further defined a number of tasks that practical theologians pursue as part of the academic discipline:

They explore the activity of believers through descriptive study and normative assessment of local theologies. They seek to discern common objectives among the ministerial subdisciplines [sic] and in the study of theology more generally. They study patterns of integration, formation, and transformation in theological education and vocational development. They seek methods by which students, faculty, and ministers might bridge practice and belief, such as ethnography, narrative theory, case study, or the hermeneutical circle of description, interpretation, and response. They develop theologies of discipleship, ministry, and faith using secular

²³⁶ Miller-McLemore, “Practical Theology,” 1741.

sources, such as the social sciences and literature, in addition to scripture, history, and doctrine.²³⁷

This study is primarily descriptive and interpretive, following Richard Osmer's first two tasks of practical theological interpretation. Though it has strong implications for normative assessment and pragmatic actions—Osmer's third and fourth tasks—this is not its primary focus. As part of the process of developing an interpretive theory that accounts for what the data describes, I discern common objectives between spiritual care, as my participants understand it, and the Dharma as provided by the various Buddhist traditions, including patterns of integration, spiritual formation, and personal transformation across four stages. I describe how Buddhist chaplains link their practice of spiritual care to their understanding of the Dharma. Finally, I develop a Framework for Buddhist reflection in spiritual care based on the dialectical interplay of the data and the Dharma.

In relation to Miller-McLemore's definition, this work is practical 'theology' in nature. This should come as no surprise, as Miller-McLemore finds practical theology suitable for interreligious work and believes it can be adapted to other religious viewpoints.²³⁸

I proceed under the assumption that this is a work of practical 'theology,' as I am inevitably guided by my training in that discipline and by my Christian predecessors, such as Bonnie Miller-McLemore, Kathleen Cahalan, R. Ruard Gansevoort, John Burkhart, Edward Farley, and Richard Osmer. Of all of these, Richard Osmer's work has proven the most useful, though the others also have important insights that can be related to contemporary Buddhism.

Richard Osmer's book, *Practical Theology: An Introduction*, lays out his four tasks of practical theological interpretation in an easy-to-follow process—as briefly described in chapter

²³⁷ Ibid., 1742.

²³⁸ Ibid., 1741-1742.

one—comprised of the descriptive/empirical, interpretive, normative, and pragmatic tasks.

Osmer begins by describing a controversy that he faced as a young minister over the placement of a church swing set and then lays out his four tasks to “guide our interpretation and response to situations of this sort.”²³⁹

Osmer refers specifically to episodes, situations, and contexts. Episodes are short-term events that take place in a single location, such as a twenty-minute conversation with a patient in a hospital room. Situations are longer patterns of events, relationships, and circumstances that form a narrative in which an episode occurs, such as a patient being admitted for surgery and then recovering from that surgery, during which time, various medical personnel, family, and the chaplain visit them. Situations arise in contexts made up of interdependent social and natural systems with emergent properties that influence everything that occurs. Episodes, situations, and contexts are what we, as ‘theologians,’ seek to interpret in the process of practical theological interpretation.²⁴⁰

In my early interviews with Buddhist chaplains, I inquired about specific episodes of reflection during which the chaplains may have found themselves recollecting, dwelling on, or attempting to make sense of in a particular encounter with a careseeker. However, my participants and I ultimately found this line of questioning unhelpful. Reflection is not always episodic, linear, or easily distinguished from the rest of life in the same way that an encounter with a careseeker is.

We may be able to report verbatim what a patient said and what we said in return. We may even, to some extent, be able to report what we thought or felt at the time of that episode.

²³⁹ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 2-4.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 7-12.

But reflecting on that episode later is much more difficult to pin down to a single time and place. For example, perhaps we thought about it in the car on the way home, in the shower the next morning, or while reading a book the following week. Perhaps we discussed it obliquely with a friend at dinner and then in more detail with our CPE supervisor the following day, because we only just finally realized it was still bothering us.

By the fourth interview, I found myself inquiring more about situations within particular contexts, rather than about specific episodes of reflection. Interviews drew out long patterns of events, such as how participants first started reflecting on their spiritual lives, how they then began to reflect on their work as chaplains, the relationships that facilitated that reflection, and the circumstances in which it took place, be it therapy, a *sangha* (community), graduate studies, or CPE. Participants were far more able and willing to describe these situations and contexts in relation to how their process of reflection and meaning-making unfolded.

When possible, I continued to ask for specific examples of episodes or strings of episodes, particularly in relation to when reflection changed the way a chaplain provided spiritual care. In their responses, the chaplains shared poignant stories of how something a careseeker, teacher, supervisor, or peer said or did changed their thinking on an episode in a way that affected subsequent behavior. Sometimes, they could only offer general descriptions, such as feeling “more confident” or “more authentic” over time. This focus on situations and contexts (and episodes, to a limited extent) is suitable for the application of Richard Osmer’s tasks of practical theological interpretation.

Osmer sets out his four tasks (though he does not claim they are original to him) as part of a hermeneutic circle, or spiral, that bridge the various subdisciplines of practical theology and also bridge theory and practice; they do so because of the inherent “interconnectedness of

ministry.”²⁴¹ Buddhists would refer to this as *pratītyasamutpāda* in Sanskrit, or “dependent origination,”²⁴² more commonly translated as “interdependence.” Osmer believes that Christian ministers struggle to “grasp these interconnections” as a “by-product of specialization in the academy.”²⁴³ This is one area that Buddhist approaches to education and training may be able to constructively address.

Moreover, Osmer says the task of “congregational leaders” can no longer be to simply hand down orthodox interpretation from on-high, but rather “guiding the congregation as a community of interpretation,” especially in “dialogue with people when life brings them up short.”²⁴⁴ While Osmer is discussing the Christian context of pastors and churches, this easily applies to chaplains working in interfaith settings as well. Rather than listening to a careseeker in crisis and then providing an interpretation of their situation from our religious tradition, we must help them draw on their own “community of interpretation” based on what they already know, believe, and value, which is conditioned by their background, language, culture, and tradition, both as individuals and members of various communities.

As we do so, we must practice reflexivity and take care that the ways we mentally interpret what we hear does not distort the careseeker’s meaning into something more comprehensible to our own worldview. Some of the participants in this study voiced reluctance to participate in certain patterns of reflection that they felt constituted a danger of “fabrication,” or misinterpreting the careseeker’s meaning or inventing meaning that wasn’t there. They sometimes challenged their teachers, supervisors, and peers on this issue (see chapter four).

²⁴¹ Ibid., 12-15.

²⁴² See “*pratītyasamutpāda*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 669-670.

²⁴³ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 15.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 24.

This cautious approach aligns well with Osmer's warnings and points to a critical distinction between Christian and Buddhist approaches to hermeneutics. Musashi Tachikawa points out that (some) Christians view language as a "trustworthy" vehicle of divine revelation. As John 1:1 states, "In the beginning was the Word (*logos*), and the Word was with God and the Word was God."²⁴⁵ Buddhism, meanwhile, has always been suspicious of language, because, "fundamentally, language is delusional and cannot transmit truth."²⁴⁶

As I have argued in the past and still maintain, the Buddhist practical 'theologian' must acknowledge that normativity inevitably begins with the descriptive/empirical task and proceeds through the process of the interpretive task. The words we use to describe a situation are colored by our assumptions, preconceptions, and biases and go on to color our interpretations, normative judgments, and pragmatic interventions in sometimes subtle and sometimes egregious ways.²⁴⁷ Nevertheless, hermeneutics is an important cornerstone of this work.

Osmer is not the only practical theologian to stress the importance of hermeneutics. Bonnie Miller-McLemore stresses the importance of "the hermeneutical circle of description, interpretation, and response" in her definition of practical theology.²⁴⁸ My approach is influenced primarily by these two practical theologians, but also by Gijsbert Dingemans,²⁴⁹ Ruud

²⁴⁵ New International Version (NIV), <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A1>.

²⁴⁶ Musashi Tachikawa, *Essays in Buddhist Theology* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2012), 8.

²⁴⁷ Monica Sanford, "Buddhist Practical Theology? A Literature Review," https://www.academia.edu/7204753/Buddhist_Practical_Theology_A_Literature_Review, 13-15.

²⁴⁸ Miller-McLemore, "Practical Theology," 1742.

²⁴⁹ Gijsbert D.J. Dingemans, "Practical Theology in the Academy: A Contemporary Overview," *The Journal of Religion* 76 (1996): 82-96.

Gansevoort,²⁵⁰ and Kathleen Cahalan.²⁵¹ I find an affinity between the hermeneutics used in practical theology and in Buddhism, especially critiques of Modernity and Post-Modernity.

In the case of practical theology, hermeneutics run both ways in interpreting lived experiences and texts. Buddhist psychology has a great deal to say about the way the human mind interprets lived experiences, both rightly and (mostly) wrongly (due to the mediation of perceptual filters, biased desires, and imprecise language), while Buddhist hermeneutics is concerned with the interpretation of Buddhist texts, particularly scriptures. Both forms of interpretation are employed in this study. I interpret the lived experiences of Buddhist chaplains using a framework from Buddhist texts, and Buddhist texts are reinterpreted through the lens of lived experience, resulting in the Three *Prajñās* Framework of Reflection in Spiritual Care.

Bhikshuni Lozang Trinlae, an American Buddhist nun in a Tibetan order, has published two articles²⁵² and a forthcoming book²⁵³ asserting that practical theological approaches and methods are suitable for Buddhist work, and she uses them in her own work. Bhikshuni Trinlae

²⁵⁰ R. Ruard Gansevoort, "Forks in the Road When Tracing the Sacred: Practical Theology as Hermeneutics of Lived Religion," International Academy of Practical Theology, 2009 Presidential Address, accessed March 20, 2015, http://www.ruardgansevoort.nl/pdf/2009_Presidential.pdf, 3.

²⁵¹ Kathleen A. Cahalan, "Three Approaches to Practical Theology, Theological Education, and the Church's Ministry," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 9, no. 1 (2005): 63-94.

²⁵² Bhikshuni Lozang Trinlae, "Prospects for a Buddhist Practical Theology" *International Journal of Practical Theology* 18, no. 1 (2014): 7-22; Bhikshuni Lozang Trinlae, "Is South Asia's Buddhist Leader the Gyalwang Drukpa an Ecofeminist?: Dialectical, Grounded Analysis of Eminent Feminist Theology Illuminates the Foundations for a Vajrayana Buddhist Ecofeminism," *International Journal of Dharma Studies* 3, no. 1 (2015): 1-14.

²⁵³ Bhikshuni Lozang Trinlae, *Kun-mkhyen Pad-ma dKar-po's Amitayus Tradition of Vajrayana Buddhism: Contemplative Text, Phenomenological Experience, and Epistemological Process* (Kathmandu, Nepal: Vajra Books, forthcoming).

accepts the definition of practical theology (in her summary) as an “empirically descriptive and critically constructive theory of religious practice.”²⁵⁴

She combines this with David Tracy’s definition of praxis as a dialectical and mutually transformative relationship between theory and practice to create her understanding of Buddhist “practical theology praxis.” Trinlae favors “practical theology praxis” due to its resonance with Buddhist theories of *karma*, which she describes as “the locus of practical dynamic processes by which intentions are transformed into executed results.”²⁵⁵ She maintains this formulation in her second article and claims it is “[r]eminiscent of Buddhist ontology” as “a ‘middle-way’ practical theology of sorts” standing between “speculative thinking” and “radical, positivistic ‘empiricism.’”²⁵⁶

The Middle Way is part of the Buddha’s first teaching, in which he advises students to eschew both the extremes of ascetic self-mortification and hedonistic indulgence,²⁵⁷ and it has been adapted to many other spectrums of extremes since then. Thus, Trinlae advocates for a middle way between ungrounded abstraction and overemphasis on specificity leading to relativism.

Her first article briefly considers the implications of practical theology for Buddhism in interreligious dialogue. The second article focuses on practical theological methods and

²⁵⁴ Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 7, in Bhikshuni Lozang Trinlae, “Leveraging Inter-religious Dialogue into Transformative Action Using Practical Theology’s Reflexive Frameworks” *Journal of Interreligious Studies* 11 (2013): 52.

²⁵⁵ Trinlae, “Leveraging Inter-religious Dialogue into Transformative Action Using Practical Theology’s Reflexive Frameworks,” 52.

²⁵⁶ Trinlae, “Prospects for a Buddhist Practical Theology,” 7.

²⁵⁷ See “*madhyamapratipad*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 489.

frameworks. (I cannot yet review her forthcoming book, but I have learned that it continues to support practical theological methods in reference to Buddhism.)²⁵⁸ Trinlae asserts that Buddhism needs a practical theology “because Buddhist congregations, clergy, religion teachers, etc., have the right to benefit from critical, normative, and pragmatic reflection on praxis.” This will benefit the “full spiritual formation of their congregants.”²⁵⁹

Those who share this interest, as Trinlae and I do, have found refuge in Christian seminaries, rather than Buddhist studies departments, due to religious studies’ traditional aversion to ‘theological,’ constructive, or applied projects. Other experiments in practical theology and Buddhism have been conducted by Christian-identified (or multi-religious) theologians, including Duane Bidwell and Insook Lee of the New York Theological Seminary, though her work demonstrates some of the same struggles as Bidwell’s 2004 article (see chapter two). Others are sure to follow this path, as fellow Buddhists complete training programs in practical theology at various non-Buddhist schools.²⁶⁰

To conclude this section, I find practical theological methods suitable for application to the study of Buddhists and Buddhism, particularly in relation to Buddhist chaplaincy and spiritual care. I am primarily influenced by the work of Bonnie Miller-McLemore and Richard Osmer, and I employ Osmer’s framework in this work, particularly the first two tasks, to describe and interpret the situations and contexts in which Buddhist chaplains work.

²⁵⁸ Personal conversation with the author on November 19, 2017, in Boston, MA.

²⁵⁹ Trinlae, “Prospects for a Buddhist Practical Theology,” 5.

²⁶⁰ I am aware of a fellow Buddhist at Claremont School of Theology who entered the year after I did and another who graduated the year prior to Trinlae, thus producing a small stream of trained Buddhist practical ‘theologians.’

I have employed formal attending in my interviews with Buddhist chaplains to assemble a qualitative dataset that describes “what is going on in particular episodes, situations, and contexts.”²⁶¹ This project employs all the elements of research design Osmer finds important in the descriptive/empirical task, including a clearly stated purpose, strategy of inquiry (grounded theory), research plan, and the researcher’s reflexivity “to contribute to fundamental knowledge and theory.”²⁶² I have used semi-structured interviews to collect data, with a sequence of primarily open-ended questions and prompts, while also following up on unexpected ideas or issues.²⁶³

Osmer identifies a number of metatheoretical perspectives affecting research during the descriptive/empirical task; in this work, I am most strongly influenced by pragmatism²⁶⁴ and interpretive social science.²⁶⁵ Implementing the interpretive task leans more towards theoretical interpretation, or “the ability to draw on theories...to understand...particular episodes, situations, and contexts,” in Osmer’s spectrum of spirituality in sagely wisdom.²⁶⁶ Osmer’s description of the role of “wise judgment” in this process resonates with the Buddhist concepts of *prajñā* and *upāya*, or “skill in means,”²⁶⁷ which likewise value the “relevant particulars” of a situation, discern “moral ends,” and find the “most effective means” to achieve them. While Osmer does list grounded theory among the research methods employed in the first task, the role of theory in

²⁶¹ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 38-39.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 48-49.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 82-84.

²⁶⁷ See “*upāya*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 942.

the second task is described more in reference to apply pre-existing theories than in constructing new theories.

When engaging in theoretical interpretation, Osmer evaluates theories in three ways: 1) assessing the model or root metaphor on which a theory is built to understand its perspective, 2) identifying its disciplinary perspective and “level of life,” or how well it explains what systems at what levels, and 3) evaluating its central argument, be it dialectical or dialogical.²⁶⁸ These criteria can be applied both to existing theories being used to interpret a particular circumstance and to theories generated through the process of description and interpretation.

In the development of the Framework itself, I rely on a method akin²⁶⁹ to mutual critical correlation²⁷⁰ between the *Buddhadharma* and the data. It is difficult to say which takes priority

²⁶⁸ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 113-121.

²⁶⁹ I say “akin” because the scholarly literature on mutual critical correlation is so laden with Christian assumptions that I sometimes find it difficult to fully relate it to Buddhism. For example, David Tracy states: “...*practical theology* is the mutually critical correlation of the interpreted theory and praxis of the Christian fact [emphasis added] and the interpreted theory and praxis of the contemporary situation” in David Tracy, “The Foundations of Practical Theology,” *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church, and World*, ed. Don Browning (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 76. He draws strongly on Aristotle, as do many of his contemporaries, an intellectual heritage that Buddhists do not share, despite resemblances between *phronesis* and *prajñā*. Likewise, Buddhists have never been as interested in distinguishing between theory and practice (and thus inventing “praxis” as a term to reunify them) as western scholars and theologians. Moreover, Tracy lays out four steps in his model, which I do not follow, though some of my work bears a resemblance to them, especially in relation to the interpretation of the data and Dharma (hermeneutics) and the disciplined and critical theoretical reflection on practices to determine how the data correlate with the Dharma. Therefore, if anything, my work follows in the spirit of mutual critical correlation, if not the letter of Tracy’s model. I also feel that this process is in keeping with the nature of the Dharma itself, not something new or imported from Christian methods, such as mutual critical correlation, though the Dharma has no particular name for this process that I am aware of, aside from teachings that link certain practices to the development of wisdom. Therefore, calling it “akin” to “mutual critical correlation” will have to suffice. This confusion of technical language is one of the major drawbacks of doing this kind of comparative theology.

²⁷⁰ Tracy, “The Foundations of Practical Theology,” 61-82.

in this instance, as the data represents lived experience and the Dharma itself insists on the priority of lived experience over other forms of knowledge.²⁷¹ Cognate disciplines (aside from the methods themselves, i.e., grounded theory) have not played a major role in this dialectic, but I predict they will become more central to the third and fourth tasks (normative and pragmatic) in future scholarly work on this topic. The Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection and Spiritual Care is subject to these evaluations in chapters five and six. The next two chapters of Osmer's book describe the normative and pragmatic tasks, which I will not cover here, as they are not part of this study. I describe the shapes these tasks could take in chapter six, when discussing future avenues for research.

Constructivist Grounded Theory

This is a qualitative study using a constructivist grounded theory approach to collecting and analyzing data and building theory.²⁷² As a result, the lines between data collection, analysis, and theory-building are permeable,²⁷³ as these processes tend to overlap and/or switch back and forth. Grounded theory has precedent as an accepted research practice in relation to both Buddhism and practical theology.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ See, for example, "Kalama Sutta," trans. Soma Thera, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/soma/wheel008.html>.

²⁷² Per Charmaz, this is common in this type of research. See Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE Publication, 2014), 93.

²⁷³ Ibid., 93.

²⁷⁴ See, for example: Deborah J. Barrett, "A Zen Approach to the Psychological and Pastoral Care of Dying Persons," PhD diss., United States International University, San Diego Campus, 1994; Mark Beitel, Maria Genova, Zev Schuman-Olivier, Ruth Arnold, S. Kelly Avants, and Arthur Margolin, "Reflections by Inner-City Drug Users on a Buddhist-Based Spirituality-Focused Therapy: A Qualitative Study" *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 77, no. 1 (2007): 1-9; Wendy Cadge, "Gendered Religious Organizations," *Gender & Society* 18, no. 6 (2004): 777-793; Peter Elsass and Kalsang Phuntsok, "Tibetans' Coping Mechanisms Following Torture: An Interview Study of Tibetan Torture Survivors' Use of Coping Mechanisms and How These Were Supported by Western Counseling," *Traumatology* 15, no. 1 (2009): 3-10;

An iterative interview process using constructive interviewing practices²⁷⁵ and constant comparative analysis of the data revealed a substantive theory accounting for the practice/process of Dharma reflection among Buddhist chaplains: the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection and Spiritual Care. In accordance with grounded theory, the data drove the collection and analysis processes through strategic sampling to generate categories, codes, and theories that emerged as the Framework.

I relied on a constructivist grounded theory model as developed by Kathy Charmaz (2006). Constructivist grounded theory acknowledges the relative and subjective, or “constructed,” nature of theories, which are “inseparable from social existence.” In other words, rather than assuming the researcher (myself) is an unbiased and objective observer (an impossibility), constructivist grounded theory engages the researcher in the reflexive consideration of interpretive understanding emerging from specific contexts, interactions, and shared (or divergent) viewpoints between researcher and participants. This is distinct from earlier forms of grounded theory, which stressed objective empiricism.²⁷⁶ Reflexivity is also an important feature of the descriptive/empirical task, per Osmer,²⁷⁷ and a constructivist approach supports this.

Michael Pagis, “Evoking Equanimity: Silent Interaction Rituals in Vipassana Meditation Retreats,” *Qualitative Sociology* 38, no. 1 (2015): 39-56; Jerry Z. Park and Elaine Howard Ecklund, “Negotiating Continuity: Family and Religious Socialization for Second-Generation Asian Americans,” *Sociological Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2007): 93-118; and Neely Myers, Sara Lewis, and Mary Ann Dutton, “Open Mind, Open Heart: An Anthropological Study of the Therapeutics of Meditation Practice in the US,” *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry: An International Journal of Cross-Cultural Health Research* 39, no. 3 (2015): 487-504.

²⁷⁵ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 91-103.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 13-14.

²⁷⁷ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 113-121.

²⁷⁷ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 48-49.

Grounded theory was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the 1960s to counteract the trend toward confirmation bias for preexisting theories among qualitative researchers. It emerged from the “symbolic interactionist” school of sociology, which is interested in “the meanings of events to people and the symbols they use to convey that meaning.”²⁷⁸ Charmaz also cites grounded theory as part of the pragmatist tradition due to its emphases on both meaning and action.²⁷⁹ This idea relies on the experience of “self” and the ability to engage in interior conversation with oneself to determine meanings that then guide responses.²⁸⁰ Moreover, meanings must be shared, such as through a family, culture, or religion, and then revised through ongoing encounter with the world (i.e., Osmer’s “contexts”).

Grounded theory has been applied extensively in healthcare settings, as conditions of illness, injury, and dying force people to reexamine old meanings in the face of crisis. (See, for example, Glaser and Strauss’s work with dying patients,²⁸¹ Fagerbaugh and Strauss’s work on pain management,²⁸² and Corbin and Strauss’s work on chronic illness.²⁸³) The purpose of

²⁷⁸ Cynthia Baker, Judith Wuest, and Phyllis Noerager Stern, “Method Slurring: The Grounded Theory/Phenomenology Example,” *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 17 (1992): 1356.

²⁷⁹ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 13.

²⁸⁰ Other researchers, such as the moral psychologist Jonathan Haidt, have more recently proposed that this is a reverse process. Humans behave according to subconscious feelings and desires and then engage in post-hoc reasoning and dialogue to justify and make meaning from their actions, for themselves and others, after the fact. See Jonathan Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 64-80. Buddhist teaching and practical theology would suggest this is a dialectical process, though particular individuals may experience it more in one direction than the other.

²⁸¹ Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, (1967; repr., New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Publishing, 1999).

²⁸² Shizuko Y. Fagerhaugh and Anselm L. Strauss, *Politics of Pain Management: Staff-Patient Interaction* (Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley, 1977).

²⁸³ Juliet M. Corbin and Anselm L. Strauss, *Unending Work and Care: Managing Chronic Illness at Home* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988).

grounded theory is to explain a situation “by identifying the core and subsidiary processes operating in it,”²⁸⁴ such as processes of ‘theological’ or Dharmic reflection.

Glaser and Strauss developed a rigorous and systematic method of collecting, coding, and analyzing data to develop original theories “grounded” in the data themselves. Constant comparative analysis ensures that the researcher does not fall prey to letting preconceptions and confirmation bias creep into the theories as they develop. Charmaz developed constructivist grounded theory in the 1990s in response to earlier theorists “clinging to an outdated modernist epistemology” that did not sufficiently account for the influence of the researcher’s subjective position.²⁸⁵

I have described my own subjective position to the research²⁸⁶ as per Charmaz, a position I will continue to interrogate throughout the process. I documented and maintained researcher reflexivity, as is emphasized in constructivist grounded theory, through the process of memoing following each interview and at each stage of analysis. Memoing records the researcher’s ideas, thoughts, and questions on the way toward developing a theory that accounts for the data (see more in the section on memoing, below).

Semi-structured interviews elicited long-form meaning-making narratives and details of the processes that affect this narrative using “What was it like...?” and “How was it when...?” questions and “Tell me about...” prompts. Per Charmaz, this form of interviewing “emphasizes

²⁸⁴ Baker, Wuest, and Stern, “Method Slurring,” 1357.

²⁸⁵ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 13-14.

²⁸⁶ My position is that of a peer-researcher: a Buddhist chaplain studying Buddhist chaplains; a scholar engaged in interreligious research and dialogue for primarily political and pragmatic reasons; a trained practical theologian; a practicing Buddhist with epistemological commitments to various Buddhist concepts, particularly *prajñā*, and soteriological goals, particularly liberation from suffering; a white, middle-class, able-bodied, American-raised, cis-female, post-Christian, convert Buddhist.

going into emergent phenomena and defining their properties.”²⁸⁷ In this case, reflection methods are emergent phenomena²⁸⁸ predicated on the situations and contexts in which Buddhist chaplains are trained and work, as well as their personal backgrounds. “What” and “how” questions were used to “shape a subsequent theoretical analysis,” per Charmaz, based on the chaplains’ narratives.

According to Peter Levine, “Narratives can carry moral meaning without relying upon general principles.”²⁸⁹ In other words, what is good and bad, what a person should and should not do can be inferred from the way a story is told, even if no explicit statements of ethical rules or moral obligations are made. Narratives are undergirded by moral assumptions, often left unsaid because they are believed to be shared between listener and storyteller. In this sense, narratives can also carry ‘theological’ or Dharmic meaning that may not be apparent until they are analyzed for their defining properties. Interviews elicited the reflection process, that is, the methods—formal or informal—used to understand or make meaning. In this instance, the process is more important than the conclusion. As Chenitz and Swanson describe, “The researcher needs to understand behavior as the participants understand it, learn about their world, learn their interpretation of self in the interaction, and share their definitions.”²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 93.

²⁸⁸ Reflection methods are also properties or processes at play in spiritual care encounters, another type of emergent phenomena.

²⁸⁹ Peter Levine, *Living without Philosophy: On Narrative, Rhetoric, and Morality* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 5, quoted in Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann, *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (London: SAGE Publications, 2015), 78.

²⁹⁰ W. Carole Chenitz and Janice M. Swanson, “Qualitative Research Using Grounded Theory,” *From Practice to Grounded Theory: Qualitative Research in Nursing* (Menlo Park, CA: Addison Wesley, 1992), 7.

Subjects were given time and space to reveal or even “muddle through” their narratives,²⁹¹ as reflection is not always a conscious, linear process. During interviews, I followed a short set of scripted questions and prompts, but also deviated from the script to elicit additional meaning from the narrative at critical points, particularly in respect to specific language, which is a concern of constructivist grounded theory interviews. For example, I was keen to know how participants understood the word, “theological,” especially in reference to reflection, but other language also emerged as significant, including the term “reflection” itself, and words such as “connection,” “mature,” and “experience.” I followed constructivist interviewing techniques to gently inquire about the meanings of these words from the participants (see chapter four for results).

In addition to interviewing research participants, I also collected written reflections on careseeker encounters from them. Gathering written reflections has multiple purposes. First, writing is itself a process of thinking and reflecting and, as such, can often lead to more nuanced and/or structured conclusions than a verbal interview. Second, the process of producing written reflections on spiritual care is part of the CPE program and a skill that all Buddhist chaplains and chaplain interns who have been through CPE are familiar with. Third, the written reflection prompts build on a familiar pattern, the last section of the ‘theological’ verbatim format commonly used in CPE, but with an added emphasis on the particularity of Buddhist experience. More about this process and the prompts used can be found in the section on written reflections, below.

Interviews and written reflections were analytically coded, as described below. In grounded theory, interviewing and coding is an iterative process, with frequent pauses in the

²⁹¹ Kvale and Brinkmann, *InterViews*, 131.

collection of data to allow for analysis, followed by making adjustments to the interview process in order to focus on important ideas, concepts, processes, and meanings. This process is called “theoretical sampling,”²⁹² in which analysis drives further data collection to focus on particular categories until the data is “saturated,” or no new information is being collected. Initial coding was conducted in an open manner advocated by Charmaz, through a combination of “in vivo” coding and thematic coding.²⁹³ Two intermediate coding passes clarified areas for further data collection and theory development.²⁹⁴ The analysis culminated in theoretical coding to fully explicate the theory emerging from the data. Theoretical codes “[account] for all other codes and categories formulated thus far”²⁹⁵ and condense the “products of analysis” into their most succinct form.²⁹⁶

Literature review in grounded theory is also a continuous process. Some grounded theorists prefer not to conduct a literature review prior to collecting data in order to not bias the outcome.²⁹⁷ In this case, I have conducted a cursory review of the literature related to theological reflection from non-Buddhist sources and a thorough literature review of work on the topics of Buddhist chaplaincy and spiritual care (see chapter two). I conducted a second literature review on the Three *Prajñās* following the emergence of the Framework (see chapter five). The ultimate goal of this study’s methods is to develop an interpretive theory that accounts for the ways in

²⁹² Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 192-197. This is sometimes also called “strategic sampling,” but Charmaz uses the term “theoretical” to emphasize the purpose of the method as theory building.

²⁹³ Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2016), 105-119.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 239-250.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 250-255.

²⁹⁶ Corbin and Strauss, *Unending Work and Care*, 146.

²⁹⁷ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 306-307.

which practicing Buddhist chaplains and chaplain interns currently engage in reflection in relation to spiritual care. The following section details each stage in that process.

Methods

This section provides an overview of how participants were selected, their demographic details, how interviews were conducted, how written reflections were collected, how data was coded, and how memoing was used to build theories. Interviews, follow-up interviews, and written reflections comprise the coded data. Some grounded theory studies include memos, journals, and other documents generated by the researcher as part of the “data.” In this section, I shall refer to only that which was coded (i.e., the interviews, follow-up interviews, and written reflections), as data. Memos and other documents used in the construction of theory do constitute rich “data,” but they were not subjected to the rigorous coding process in this instance.

Participant Selection

Participants were recruited based on the following criteria included in participant solicitation materials:

- You are eligible to participate in this study if:
1. You are Buddhist, belong to a Buddhist order or lineage, OR identify as multi-religious including Buddhist
 2. You are enrolled in or have completed an MDiv degree at University of the West, Naropa University, the Institute of Buddhist Studies, Harvard Divinity School, OR Claremont School of Theology²⁹⁸
 3. You have completed OR are currently enrolled in a CPE program during the study period (May-Aug 2017)²⁹⁹

Participants then voluntarily self-selected for this study. Participants were solicited through personal networks and faculty networks. Personal networks include personally

²⁹⁸ The Master of Pastoral Studies at Emanuel College of the University of Toronto was later added when I learned that students in their program, which was then very new, had already begun CPE training.

²⁹⁹ See “Information Sheet for Research Study Participants” included in Appendix B.

approaching Buddhist chaplains I know and asking them to participate, either face-to-face at group meetings or via email, social networking, or text message. This process resulted in participants from University of the West and Claremont School of Theology. Meanwhile, participants from the Institute of Buddhist Studies, Harvard Divinity School, Naropa University, and Emmanuel College of the University of Toronto were recruited via faculty networks. An email was sent to faculty I know at these institutions with a request to personally invite a handful of current students or alumni to participate based on the participant criteria. Participants were also solicited through the social networks Facebook and Academia.edu, where I shared an information sheet for research study participants (see above). Those who were interested then contacted me via email. Informed consent was obtained via email and participation in the study did not begin until the finalized form (with the participant's signature, a witness's signature, and my signature) was shared with both the participant and myself. Participants then proceeded to submit the demographic questionnaire using a participant number assigned by me. This participant number was used for all data related to that participant so that the collection of personal information (beyond the informed consent) was limited and anonymity was maintained.

This selection process has both benefits and drawbacks. The benefits are that participants were shaped by their graduate studies and CPE training to be able to engage in the types of conversations necessary to elicit data on this topic. That is, they possessed (in general) a sufficient level of self-reflexivity to make sense of the questions I was asking and a sufficient openness to self-disclosure that enabled them to share that reflexivity with me. In some cases, even these participants struggled to understand and answer the questions posed, despite this background (see chapter four for more on areas of confusion in the interviews).

These selection criteria also ensured a certain amount of comparability between subjects based on a standardized curriculum across degrees and CPE programs. However, Buddhist chaplains with graduate educations and CPE training are not the only Buddhists engaged in providing spiritual care. Many other Buddhists are currently working in North America and other parts of the world to provide spiritual care in *sanghas* and temples, prisons and rehabilitation facilities, and hospices and schools, without the benefits of graduate education or CPE (or, rarely, CPE, but no graduate-level education). There is no way to know if my findings here are in any way representative of their experiences without further research.

Another drawback is that the participants in this research have been, in many significant respects, shaped by the expectations that this level of education and training impose upon all who undertake it—expectations formed by Christian hegemony and institutional and cultural structures of systemic power, privilege, and discrimination. How can we determine what constitutes authentic Buddhist methods of reflection when the Buddhists being studied have been profoundly influenced by Christian paradigms and western social sciences? This is an inevitable challenge of doing this research in North America. While Asians and Asian-Americans were included in the study, they, too, have been influenced by these structures and systems. As only chaplains working in North America have been included, and those chaplains work primarily with non-Buddhist careseekers, these findings may not be applicable beyond North America or with different careseeker populations. Further research on Buddhist spiritual care in Asia, Europe, and other parts of the world and with other types of populations is also needed.

The demographic characteristics of my participants are provided below for pragmatic reasons, so that readers may draw their own conclusions about the applicability of the findings

presented in later chapters to their own work based on similarity or difference between contexts and backgrounds.

Demographic Data

Fourteen participants were recruited for this study and completed the demographic questionnaire. Thirteen were interviewed (one was not, due to scheduling difficulties), eleven submitted written reflections, and five provided follow-up interviews. Below is a breakdown of the demographic data of the thirteen interview participants.

Gender	Count	Percentage
Male	9	69%
Female	4	31%
Race/Ethnicity*	Count	Percentage
White or Caucasian	7	54%
Latino/a, Chicano/a, or Hispanic	1	8%
Asian or Asian American	6	46%
<i>(*participants could choose more than one category)</i>		
National Origin	Count	Percentage
United States of America	7	54%
Latin American Country	1	8%
Japan	2	15%
Vietnam	2	15%
Sri Lanka	1	8%
Age	Count	Percentage
25-29	1	8%
30-34	3	23%
35-39	4	31%
45-49	2	15%
55-59	2	15%
65-69	1	8%

As shown above, the study participants included both men and women and an almost even number of participants of Asian ethnicity and those of non-Asian ethnicity. Likewise, about half of the participants were born in the United States; this category is not synonymous with

“white” and includes Asian-Americans, while excluding Caucasians born outside of the U.S.

Ages ranged from the mid-twenties to late sixties.

As shown below, study participants also represented all three main branches of Buddhist practice, and a few claimed multiple religious belongings. About half came from Buddhist family backgrounds, half from Christian family backgrounds, and several claimed multiple religious affiliations among their family of origin. Two were ordained monastics, six were ordained in some other manner, and five were not ordained.

Buddhist Branches Practiced*	Count	Percentage
Theravada	5	38%
Mahayana	7	54%
Vajrayana	3	23%
Did not specify	1	8%
<i>(*participants could choose more than one category)</i>		
Multiple Religious Affiliations Identified	Count	Percentage
None	9	69%
Judaism (cultural or religious)	2	15%
Shinto	1	8%
Integral Yoga	1	8%
Years of Buddhist Practice	Count	Percentage
6-10 years	2	15%
11-15 years	4	31%
16-20 years	2	15%
21-25 years	1	8%
More than 30 years	1	8%
My entire life	3	23%
Religious Affiliation of Family of Origin (i.e., parents)*		
The same tradition of Buddhism as myself	2	15%
A different tradition of Buddhism from myself	4	31%
Ancestor worship or veneration	1	8%
Shinto	1	8%
Protestant Christianity	3	23%
Catholic Christianity	3	23%
Quakerism	1	8%
Judaism, cultural, but non-observant	2	15%
Indigenous beliefs, shamanism, and animism	1	8%
Atheism	1	8%
<i>(*participants could choose more than one category)</i>		

Ordination Status	Count	Percentage
Monastic	2	15%
Priest, Minister, or Dharma Teacher	6	47%
Not Ordained	5	38%

All but two of the participants had obtained or were currently enrolled in a Master of Divinity degree program. One participant with an alternative degree proved equivalency of education through the Board Certification process of the Association of Professional Chaplains. The other participant was in the process of obtaining a Master of Pastoral Studies, a Canadian equivalent degree.

Six different universities were represented among the participants, though University of the West was overrepresented in the sample due my own affiliations with that school and ease of recruiting participants through personal networks. All participants had completed clinical pastoral education or, in one case, were currently enrolled in their first unit. Several participants had completed more than the four units of CPE required for Board Certification. Most were the only Buddhist in their CPE cohorts. Most completed CPE under Protestant Christian supervisors. None had a Buddhist supervisor during CPE. It is important to note that while most of the participants worked in healthcare settings, two were military chaplains and one was a college chaplain; all but one had healthcare experience via CPE.

Highest Degree Obtained (or pursuing)	Count	Percentage
Other Master's Degree	2	15%
Master of Divinity	11	85%
Graduate School	Count	Percentage
Claremont School of Theology	1	8%
Harvard Divinity School	3	23%
Institute of Buddhist Studies	1	8%
Naropa University	2	15%
University of Toronto, Emmanuel College	1	8%
University of the West	5	38%

Units of Clinical Pastoral Education	Count	Percentage
Currently enrolled in first unit	1	8%
One	4	31%
Two	1	8%
Four	4	31%
More than four	3	23%
Other Buddhists in CPE Cohorts	Count	Percentage
No, I was the only Buddhist	11	85%
Yes, there was one other Buddhist chaplain intern	1	8%
Yes, there were a few other Buddhist chaplain interns	1	8%
Religious Affiliations of CPE Supervisors*	Count	Percentage
Catholic Christian	3	23%
Protestant Christian	10	77%
Muslim	1	8%
Jewish	1	8%
Unitarian Universalist	1	8%
Hindu	1	8%
<i>(*participants could choose more than one category)</i>		

Care was taken³⁰⁰ to ensure diversity among the study participants in terms of gender, ethnicity, national origin, branch of Buddhism, alma mater, and ordination status. In this study, I have made no attempt to tease apart the perceptions and behaviors of different types of participants based on demographic groups, e.g., male and female, Theravada and Mahayana, etc. That may be an interesting challenge for further research. My goal was merely to ensure the sample itself was as internally diverse (though perhaps not in the same proportions) as the population of Buddhist chaplains working in the U.S. today.

These Buddhists all tended to be fairly isolated from one another during the CPE process in a way that is certainly not true of the theistic religions, particularly Christianity, despite these traditions' internal diversity. This subject was a repeated topic of conversation in the interviews

³⁰⁰ When I noticed that my volunteer participant pool was predominantly white converts, I personally invited three Asian and Asian-American participants with whom I was acquainted to join the research to ensure a more balance representation, including one more woman and one additional ordained monastic.

(see chapter four). It was rare for these chaplains to experience extended interaction with another Buddhist chaplain in a clinical setting (such as CPE), where they are far more likely to be surrounded by Christian and theocentric peers. Access to Buddhist peers during graduate school varies based on institution,³⁰¹ but was far more common than finding Buddhist colleagues during CPE or subsequent professional employment.

Interviews

I conducted thirteen initial interviews and five follow-up interviews using the constructivist methods described above. All interviews were conducted online using the video conferencing software Zoom, which has a built-in recording function. Participants were informed of this and provided verbal permission to record at the start of each interview. Only one participant expressed some concern over being recorded, but ultimately decided to remain in the study after their right to withdraw and the confidentiality and anonymity procedures were explained.

Initial interviews were conducted from June 1st to August 15th, 2017, and lasted from sixty to ninety minutes each. Follow-up interviews were conducted in the same manner from October 5th to 12th, 2017, and also lasted from sixty to ninety minutes each. Initial interviews resulted in 194 pages of single-spaced text, or 113,663 words. Follow-up interviews resulted in 81 pages of single-spaced text, or 40,436 words. Interviews were transcribed in Microsoft Word by paid transcriptionists who signed nondisclosure agreements. Audio files will be kept until the conclusion of this research, estimated to be no later than December 2018, and then destroyed. Transcripts may be kept through December 2020 per the Informed Consent (see Appendix B)

³⁰¹ Students at Harvard, Claremont, and Emmanuel College, for example, share a large portion of their coursework with non-Buddhist classmates and faculty, while students at Naropa, IBS, and University of the West tend to share coursework almost exclusively with Buddhist classmates and faculty.

and may be used to refine this research or explore alternative theoretical subjects. Interview transcripts were analyzed using the software Atlas.ti version 8 (see section on coding, below).

Interviews were performed iteratively, interspersed with memoing (see section on memoing, below) and data analysis (see the sections on coding, below). Some approaches to grounded theory suggest pausing between each interview (or data collection) to fully code and analyze the data.³⁰² I find this time-prohibitive and not very fruitful. It is difficult to draw useful theories from a single interview, which may or may not be idiosyncratic. Instead, I produced extensive memos after each interview, usually taking one to two hours to consider the interview, review certain sections of the audio file, and generate new questions. To elicit patterns in the data itself, I performed interviews in two- or three-interview sets.

After collecting and transcribing three interviews, I would pause to code the data. The first six interviews were subjected to a single coding pass focusing on thematic and in-vivo codes. After the ninth interview, I began a second coding pass that included the first six, along with interviews seven through thirteen (during this coding pass, I continued to collect data up to interview thirteen), and focused on coding for processes and values. I refined my question set twice, once after the first three interviews and again after the second three interviews. A third question set was then used for the remaining seven interviews, for a total of thirteen interviews. Following the eleventh interview, all interviews were then subjected to a third coding pass, including the final two interviews. Memoing and theory-building occurred concurrently with interviewing and coding. A major pause in data collection at this point allowed for a thorough analysis of all interviews collected to date, as well as the written reflections. At this time, I

³⁰² Per personal email communication from Dr. Sam Lee on May 31, 2017, based on his training in grounded theory.

developed several theoretical hypotheses, which I tested during follow-up interviews. For a graphic representation of this timeline, see Appendix C.

Follow-up interviews were requested with six participants, and five completed such interviews. By chance, three follow-up interviews were conducted on the same day, as per the scheduling needs of the participants. The question set used in these interviews tested the theoretical hypotheses generated from analysis of the initial interviews (described in chapter four). The collection of so much new data in a short amount of time generated an intuitive leap from which the theoretical Framework (see chapter five) developed. This Framework was tested during the final two follow-up interviews (and the fourth coding pass), which were conducted the week following the first three follow-up interviews. The same questions were used in these last two interviews, though the order of the interviews was rearranged slightly based on lessons learned from the first three follow-up interviews. In addition, the final two follow-up interview participants were presented with an early draft of the Framework for their feedback and critique. Memoing took place between each follow-up interview, and these were transcribed and included in the final pass of coding and analysis. A graphic representation of this entire process can be found on in Appendix C, including the dates of initial interviews, follow-up interviews, reflection submissions, and coding passes and which question sets were used when.

Written Reflections

In addition to interviewing, I collected written reflections on careseeker encounters from research participants. Of the thirteen participants who provided initial interviews, eleven also provided written reflections. Reflections varied in length from one-to-three pages, with the shortest being 491 words and the longest being 1,680 words. Some reflections included the reflection questions, below, in the text. A total of twenty-five pages, or 11,116 words of text, from written reflections were analyzed (see coding section, below).

The following questions were used as reflection prompts related to a spiritual care encounter:

1. What is the key spiritual, religious, or existential issue, content, connection, or assumption that you identified in this encounter?
2. What is your understanding and experience of that issue in relation to the Dharma/*Dhamma*? (If there is a relation.)
3. Where did you learn about this issue, aside from your own experience? (Please describe sources, such as books, sutras/*suttas*, teachers or teachings, etc.)
4. Is there a theme or pattern connecting this issue to other spiritual care experiences?

Analysis of essays in *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, as well as the existing structure of the CPE verbatim, contributed to the development of questions that were appropriate and intelligible to study participants. Questions were designed to be open-ended enough to allow participants to interpret them as best suited their reflexive process, yet directed enough to elicit data relevant to the research questions.

Coding Process

Initial interviews, follow-up interviews, and written reflections were all analytically coded. I shall begin by discussing the iterative coding process of the initial interviews, which make up the bulk of the data. The written reflections were all coded in one pass after the initial interviews were coded. Follow-up interviews were coded last, after the theoretical framework had emerged.

The first coding pass identified a set of thematic codes.³⁰³ In-vivo coding during the first pass also improved researcher familiarity with the data, but these code sets ultimately proved too

³⁰³ Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 105-119.

voluminous and unwieldy and were abandoned in the second pass. The second pass of coding retained and refined the thematic codes and added a layer of process and values codes. Some descriptive codes were also added to highlight the position of particular information within the text for later reference (e.g., “background,” “education,” etc.), but were not part of the theoretical analysis. A third pass of focused coding split and refined some of the most prominent codes identified in the second pass, while combining and recategorizing some of the less-prominent codes. The third pass also elicited the development of several theoretical hypotheses that were “tested” in the follow-up interviews (see chapter four).

Responses from the follow-up interviews elicited the theoretical Framework (see chapter five), which was then validated via three mechanisms. One of these mechanisms was a full theoretical coding of the data, including the initial interviews, written reflections, and follow-up interviews. Another mechanism was participant validation via the final two follow-up interviews (see chapter five). The final mechanism was via peer review, that is, sharing the Framework with academic colleagues and receiving feedback and questions (see chapter five). Only the first mechanism, theoretical coding, will be discussed in this section. Each coding pass will be discussed in turn.

The first coding pass included thematic codes and in-vivo codes, though the latter were abandoned after this pass as too numerous for effective analysis. Thematic codes identify areas within the text that provided answers to the research questions (see chapter one) and categorized those answers by a thematic typology.

The following thematic codes emerged organically in the coding of the earliest interviews, conducted using Interview Question Set 1, and they helped refine my interview approach to elicit better data. In Question Sets 2 and 3, I often directly asked participants about

the themes, such as “How was the process of sharing reflections with others for you?” or “What were some recurrent ideas or teachings that just kept popping up over and over again in your reflections?” (See Appendix D for all interview questions.) Thematic codes were applied only to initial interviews, not to written reflections, or follow-up interviews. The thirteen thematic codes include:

Thematic Codes	#	Brief Descriptions
Sharing Reflection & Feedback	99	Participant tells others about spiritual care encounters and receives feedback, primarily in the context of CPE
Theory of Buddhist Care	51	How participants see the relationship between their work as chaplains and their practice as Buddhists
Process of Learning Reflection	49	From when participants first began to reflect on their own spiritual/religious lives to reflection on spiritual care
Meditation & Reflection	41	Dialectical relationship between meditation and reflection
Sources	40	References books, scriptures, teachers, and teachings
Written Reflection	36	How participant engages in reflection through writing, either spontaneously or as assigned in coursework or CPE
Change in Care Due to Reflection	34	Descriptions of instances in which the chaplain perceived a change in their thoughts, feelings, or behaviors, particularly in relation to subsequent careseeker encounters, which they attributed to the reflection process, including sharing and receiving feedback
Understanding ‘Theological’	30	How participants understand that word, accept or reject it, or modify its meaning to suit their purposes
Recurrent Ideas in Reflection	30	Concepts from the Dharma, social sciences, other religions, or their own experience that they find prominent or frequent
Relationship to Experience	28	Dialectical relationship between direct experience and received tradition or direct experience and wisdom
Purpose of Reflection	20	Why participants do reflection and what outcomes they expect or experience
Formal vs. Informal Reflection	16	How reflection is different when done casually by oneself, for oneself, or with no particular method compared to when it is done formally, accountable to others, or with a specific method (e.g., in relation to assigned questions/prompts)

Soteriological Goals	16	Salvific goals or desired spiritual/religious outcomes
----------------------	----	--

These thematic codes were retained and refined in the second coding pass. See chapter four for important insights that emerged in relation to the thematic codes.

The second pass of coding began after the ninth interview. This coding pass focused on processes and values. Process codes were for actions using gerund verbs,³⁰⁴ such as “accepting,” “chanting,” “getting feedback,” or “supporting.” Values codes were for attitudes, beliefs, and values, which include what the speaker finds important (or reports what others find important), how the speaker thinks of feels about themselves (or reports others thinking or feeling about themselves), or what the speaker believes in relation to themselves, others, or the world (or reports others believe).³⁰⁵ These include moral codes, principles, and ideas such as “afterlife,” “gratitude,” “openness,” or “social justice.” This pass of coding elicited seventy-seven process codes and seventy-eight values codes, which were later refined in the third pass. (For a complete code list, see Appendix A.) During the second round of coding, as processes and values codes were generated, synonyms and antonyms were tracked and code definitions refined via memos. The following tables share only the most commonly occurring process and values codes:

Top 20 Process Codes	
Meditating	91
Reflecting	83
Practicing	72
Seeking	65
Watching the Mind	59
Sharing	54
Being Present	50
Supporting	44
Experiencing	44
Talking	40
Interpreting	39

Top 20 Values Codes	
Interreligious	105
Teacher	47
Dharma Knowledge	44
Compassion	40
Suffering (noun) [Negative]	37
God/Divinity	34
<i>Sangha</i>	34
Openness	29
Intensity	28
Insight	25
Not Knowing	22

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 110-111.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 131-132.

Learning	39
Suffering (verb)	37
Struggling	34
Writing	33
Broadening	30
Challenging	29
Getting Feedback	29
Listening	28
Letting Go	25

Authenticity	22
Joy	22
Emptiness & Interdependence	21
Love	21
Teamwork	21
Isolation [Negative]	19
Intentional	18
Equanimity	16
Many Right Ways	16

As one can already see from the lists above, some ambiguity emerged around how to categorize important concepts or experiences with negative valence. As a compromise solution, a second code group was created simply called “negative,” and some codes were assigned to both groups. (This grouping was changed in the third coding pass.) This is due to ambiguity around the term “value” when combined with a peculiarity of Buddhist teaching. In Buddhism, many concepts commonly considered quite pessimistic are nonetheless also considered very important, suffering (or *duḥkha*) chief among them. This was captured with the value code, “suffering (noun),” which describes statements about suffering, as compared to “suffering (verb),” a process code that describes the action of suffering, being in pain, or experiencing emotional distress. For example, “I guess, [in] Buddhism we talk a lot about, uh, identifying with the self is cause for suffering,”³⁰⁶ is coded as “suffering (noun),” while, “I had, um, ... a series of injuries in the, um, in my early thirties,”³⁰⁷ is coded as “suffering (verb).”

While suffering as either a noun or verb, value or process, is clearly negative, it is also very important to practicing Buddhists. The Buddha taught on two topics: suffering and the end

³⁰⁶ Interview 002, June 22, 2017. For ease of reference, interviews, reflections, and follow-up interviews shall be referred to by their assigned numbers. The identity of all interview participants is confidential as a condition of the research.

³⁰⁷ Interview 005, July 15, 2017.

of suffering. The fact of *duḥkha*, also translated from Sanskrit as “unsatisfactoriness,” is the First Noble Truth of Buddhism.³⁰⁸ In a nutshell, the Buddha’s teaching is all about mindfulness of the subtleties of suffering, understanding its causes, how to practice the methods of its cessation, and knowledge of the path to its cessation. Therefore, while suffering is negative, it is also very important, and importance is one of the chief hallmarks of a so-called value.

Once it was established that codes in the values group could be negative, other negative codes surfaced. Once the code group for “negative” was developed, other codes from other code groups were also cross-categorized. Common negative values included “suffering (noun),” “isolation,” and “selfish.” Common negative processes included “failing,” “missing,” and “avoiding.” In the third round of coding, discussed below, the values code group was split into two: 1) positive values and emotions, and 2) negative values and emotions. The processes code group was also split, though not in relation to positive or negative.

Following the second round of coding all thirteen initial interviews, a third round of coding commenced to focus and refine the data; this round included the written reflections. The third round followed the pattern of focused coding, which seeks to “develop the most salient categories in the data corpus,” according to Saldaña. At this point, I was making decisions about where to focus my attention and about which codes made the most sense in relation to my overall understanding of the data.³⁰⁹ Some codes that had already emerged as part of the second round were regrouped under the new groups, while other new codes were added. This process facilitated the exploration of various theories and hypotheses that emerged from the data (see the section on memoing, below, and chapter four). Additional code groups were created, tested, and

³⁰⁸ See “*duḥkha*,” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 270-271.

³⁰⁹ Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 239-240.

then reformulated. These code groups helped categorizes sections of the data under new concepts and themes. Values were split according to positive and negative valence, and processes were split according to who was acting in a given situation: the chaplain or the careseeker (abbreviated in the codes as ‘CS’). In some cases, however, process codes were split in multiple ways, including the original codes, “seeking,” “connecting,” and “watching the mind,” which were analyzed and split into multiple separate codes (see the section on code analysis, below). Throughout this process, codes and code groups that assisted in analyzing situations and contexts (per Osmer) and in identifying the properties of emergent phenomena (per Charmaz) arose. This analysis was also an important step in developing the theoretical Framework and thesis (see chapter five).

I knew I was approaching data saturation when each interview coded generated fewer new codes than the prior interview. Early in the process, each interview generated dozens of new codes, while the final interview in the process required only three new codes, and those codes did not represent major new directions in the data or theory, just variations on existing themes.³¹⁰

³¹⁰ Evidence of saturation includes when later interviews generate very few new codes and no new code groups, participant responses can be classified with previously identified spectrums, notes taken during interviews are shorter, and post-interview memos are more succinct and contain fewer questions. In this project, I followed the approach of Guest, Bunce, and Johnson as described by Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 106-107, for saturating data, rather than saturating conceptual categories due to time and resource constraints inherent in a dissertation. (In future research, I would prefer to aim for saturation of theoretical categories, but that was not feasible in this project.) Data saturation is evidenced when new data does not alter existing themes, theories, or groups; does not reveal significant new codes; or does not prompt a new split in an existing code, though this is not sufficient to prove saturation of theoretical categories. In relation to theory, saturation is achieved when additional data does not reveal new patterns or properties for key theoretical categories. See Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 213-216. For more about data saturation of conceptual categories, see chapter five.

The third round of coding also included the first pass of coding the eleven written reflections, in which each participant reflected on a particular spiritual care encounter they had with a careseeker(s). Ten code groups were generated during the third round, including:

Third Pass Code Groups	Codes	Most Common Codes in Group
Factors & Situations	51	End-of-Life, Family Support, Alcohol & Drugs, Cause of Suffering, Mental Health Diagnosis, Family Conflict
Dharma Concepts	42	Causation, Impermanence, Compassion, Miracle, Liberation from Suffering, Bodhisattva, Wisdom
Chaplain Actions	41	Chaplain Assessment, Chaplain Contemplates, Chaplain's Spiritual Practice, Chaplain Supports
Careseeker Actions & Concerns	39	CS Sharing, CS Loss of Agency, CS's Spiritual Hope, CS as Caregiver, CS Identity, CS Changes Perspective
Positive Emotions & Values	27	Compassion, Love, Trust, Mindfulness, Emotional Awareness, Normalize/Humanize, Equanimity
Outcomes	22	Miracle, Family Support, Liberation from Suffering, Death, CS Changes Perspective/Behavior
Sources of Knowledge	20	Tradition Guiding, Teammates/Colleagues, Sacred Texts, Chaplain's Spiritual Practice, Previous Experience w/ CS
Negative Emotions & Values	15	Grief & Loss, Anger, Hopelessness, Loneliness, Anxiety, Guilt, Frustration, Emotional Distance, Sadness, Fear
Theistic Concepts	8	Miracle, God, Faithfulness, Jesus, God's Grace & Love, Deity, Devotion, God's Will
Types of Careseekers	4	Christian CS, Nonreligious CS, Buddhist CS, Jewish CS

Several codes belonged to more than one code group. For example, the code “chaplain’s spiritual practice” was initially categorized under “chaplain actions,” but was later referenced as a “source of knowledge” or insight for the chaplain. “Compassion” is categorized in both “Dharma concepts” and “positive emotions & values.” While most participants in this study referenced “Miracle” as a purely theocentric concept, at least one Buddhist chaplain cited examples of miracles performed by bodhisattvas in the Buddhist sutras, prompting the cross-categorization of this code in “Dharma concepts,” “theistic concepts,” and “outcomes,” as it is

something many careseekers hope for. Most codes were categorized in one or, occasionally, two groups, “miracle” being the sole (and oddly appropriate) exception.

Quotation length also influences how codes are analyzed in relation to other codes. During the second round of coding, interview quotations remained long, resulting in numerous co-occurring codes. This allowed me to examine relationships between thematic codes and process and values codes. It also added to the complexity and, occasionally, the confusion of the data. In some cases, the data itself necessitated this approach, as verbal statements often tend to wander, leading to several sentences on the same topic, but with different emphases, and the use of various ambiguous pronouns (e.g., “this,” “it,” “that”). Longer quotations helped keep these pronouns with their initial descriptive statement, resulting in more intelligible quotations when they were grouped under their code, out of the context of the original interview. In the third round of coding, codes were better refined and the data more discrete, allowing for shorter quotations.

In contrast to the interviews, quotations in the written reflections were often short. Written language is generally more succinct and direct, with clear differentiation of topics between sentences and paragraphs. The lessons I learned from coding interviews also helped me focus on key words and phrases within the reflections, leading to more refined quotations and codes.

Thus, we get a very good snapshot of the kind of language Buddhist chaplains use when describing various situations. However, using shorter quotations also led to less co-occurrence of codes, which can obscure relationships between codes.³¹¹ This was deemed an acceptable trade-

³¹¹ Code co-occurrence or code overlap is not addressed in Charmaz’s manual, *Constructing Grounded Theory*. This is a process I learned from the data analysis tool I prefer,

off in the reflections, which were significantly shorter than the interviews. Written reflections accounted for only 5 percent of the total textual data, but had an outsized impact on the development of the theoretical framework due to their succinctness and coherency. In addition, the reflections often reaffirmed data that was already present in the interviews, data which could be analyzed for code relationships.

The analysis culminated in theoretical coding in order to fully explicate the theory that emerged from the data—the Three *Prajñās* Framework. Theoretical codes “[account] for all other codes and categories formulated thus far”³¹² and condense the “products of analysis” into their most succinct form.³¹³ In this case, theoretical codes based on the Three *Prajñās* in their four stages were applied to the interviews and the written reflections. Theoretical codes include:

Stage	Code	Occurrence	Brief Description
Self	Stage 1: Listening	32	Listening to Dharma talks and teachings; reading books and articles; studying; primarily done on one’s own
	Stage 1: Contemplating	49	Analysis and reflecting upon the Dharma and one’s life; learning to meditate; primarily done on one’s own
	Stage 1: Practicing	12	Meditating, including <i>jnana</i> practice; chanting; ritual; integrating the Noble Truths in life
Student	Stage 2: Listening	26	Formal course of study provided by a teacher, mentor, spiritual friend; primarily within a formal teacher-student relationship
	Stage 2: Contemplating	49	Reflecting and analyzing Dharma through conversation and dialogue; learning meditation from a meditation teacher

Atlas.ti, which includes tools for creating reports based on code co-occurrence. I have found this analysis useful, especially when comparing descriptive codes (short quotations) to thematic or theoretical codes (long quotations). Using this type of analysis, relationships between codes emerge that might not otherwise be visible. For example, when the descriptive code “minimized/misunderstood” appears within the same quotes (i.e., co-occurs) as the thematic code for “sharing reflection & feedback,” this indicates that although Buddhist chaplains regularly shared their reflections with CPE cohorts, this was not always a positive experience. This analysis contributed to the findings and theory-building in chapter four.

³¹² Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 250-255.

³¹³ Corbin and Strauss, *Unending Work and Care*, 146.

	Stage 2: Practicing	37	Retreat practice, meditation and other practices under a teacher, Three Refuges; practice with a <i>sangha</i> or community
Chaplain	Stage 3: Listening	88	Listening to careseekers and self during caregiving for own learning process
	Stage 3: Contemplating	157	Reflecting on interactions with careseekers, by self and with others, to learn
	Stage 3: Practicing	113	Taking action to further own learning process; appropriate self-care
Spiritual Friend	Stage 4: Listening	57	Inviting careseeker to share their worldview; facilitating careseeker “listening” to self-knowledge
	Stage 4: Contemplating	30	Inquiring to help careseeker explore own worldview; seek to understand, empathize, etc.
	Stage 4: Practicing	48	Assessing effects of careseeker’s worldview and implementing appropriate spiritual care interventions

For a complete description of each code and the criteria used to assign them to the data, see Appendix A. Theoretical codes were applied over the existing code schema from the third pass for all interviews and reflections. This resulted in a rich collection of theoretical codes overlapping with descriptive codes and creating relationships for further analysis and theorizing.

Memoing

Memoing is an intermediate step between coding and writing a scholarly draft. It is also a method for building theory, as researchers record their thoughts, questions, connections, or insights in relation to their data. Memoing helps one move from the concrete particulars of transcripts and codes to the abstract patterns of concepts and theories. It is a conversation between the researcher, the data, and, to some extent, the literature.³¹⁴ Charmaz reminds us that memoing in grounded theory is not the process of producing formal policy, as in business or government. It is spontaneous and, as such, “methods of memo-writing are few.”³¹⁵

³¹⁴ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 162.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 165.

During the research process, I generated four types of analytical memos. I was disciplined about memoing immediately following each interview; this was my first type of memo. During the coding process, memoing was more spontaneous. The Atlas.ti software I used to code and analyze my data includes a function for recording memos and relating them to the remainder of the data. My second, third, and fourth types of memos emerged during this process.

The first type of memo was generated immediately after each interview and recorded as a Word document. These memos summarized interesting points from the interview that I transcribed from handwritten notes taken during the interview. They included observations and questions about theory, such as:

[Participant m]ade a strong connection between experience and the practice of reflection but a weak connection between particular sources (teachers or written work) and reflection on spiritual care. → Is this a common trait among Buddhists? Among chaplains in general? So far I would say the results have been mixed. It will be interesting to see [their] written reflection.³¹⁶

Memos also included observations and questions about my own reflexivity, assumptions, and the efficacy of the research process, such as:

Is there a better way to surface my own assumptions within the line of questioning and test them? Should I just tell the participants, “I’m coming in with these assumptions based on my own experience.... How does that sound to you? How was your experience similar or different?” Has anyone tried this approach before and how did it go? Maybe this would be a good series of questions for the third round of interviews. Or maybe I just need to get much, much simpler, which is always my first instinct – go straight to “What is theological reflection? How do you do it? How is it different for you as a Buddhist chaplain?” Maybe I also need to consult an expert. What would a CPE supervisor expect a new student to know/do related to this topic? What would they expect a 4th unit student to know/do?³¹⁷

³¹⁶ Post-interview memo for Interview 002, June 22, 2017.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

These memos helped refine my interview questions twice (and even recorded the earliest drafts of these revisions) to elicit better data from participants. Later memos became more succinct as data saturation was achieved. The need to take fewer handwritten notes during interviews and the similarity of new interview responses to prior responses, even when those responses tended to vary on a previously identified spectrum of viewpoints, provided evidence of saturation. A memo from August 1, 2017, stated: “Aside from my general appreciation for this participant’s wisdom, I think I am short on analysis. I wonder if this is because I am just tired from other projects or if I am reaching data saturation. I have three more interviews lined up, so that will most likely tell.”³¹⁸

The final three interviews were rich and interesting in their contrasts to one another and to earlier interviews, yet also contained evidence of data saturation. My memos for these interviews also highlighted interesting avenues for further research in Buddhist chaplaincy, beyond the boundaries of the current study. For example:

I am amazed at the ease with which every participant I talk to finds a perfectly valid justification of their work within the Dharma and that almost each one is different. This participant talked about *upādāna* [fuel, attachment] and the spiritual friend. Other participants talk about compassion and the bodhisattva vow. Others talk about meditation and the path of practice and cultivation. Only one or two seemed to struggle to find a relationship between Buddhism and their work as a chaplain. The rest see a natural and nurturing relationship. While motivation for becoming a chaplain and the relationship between chaplaincy and the Dharma would be a very interesting thing to study, it is not the primary concern of this research.³¹⁹

In addition to developing more effective interview questions, post-interview memos also contained some of the earliest drafts of the hypotheses that were generated from the data collection and analysis processes. These were developed further in later analytical memos.

³¹⁸ Post-interview memo for Interview 001, August 1, 2017.

³¹⁹ Post-interview memo for Interview 014, August 15, 2017.

My second type of memo was recorded in the section for comments on codes within the Atlas.ti software. These memos defined codes by their properties and listed keywords from the data that are included under that code, as well as what was excluded from that code. They also hypothesized or recorded relationships between codes or questions about the code. For example, the memo on the process code, “accepting,” states:

accepting, allowing, approaching, diving in, attending, encountering,
attuning, showing up, meeting, dealing, facing, turning toward, no agenda,
containing
vs. not facing, turning away, 'fixing'
Quality of Presence
Related to: observing, accompanying³²⁰

These memos were useful in helping me keep the codes straight and relate them to code groups and other codes. They could be updated, expanded, or revised as the code was applied to new data. They are also searchable, so that when coding later data, if I recalled that I had a code for an idea but did not recall the exact name of the code, I could search for a synonym and find the code by its memo.

The third type of analytical memo concerns themes that emerged in the first and second passes of data coding, and several were later developed into codes in their own right. According to Charmaz, the “early” memos help researchers see what is happening in their data.³²¹ In my case, these memos were recorded into the Atlas.ti software’s memoing function. This includes memos with titles such as “Connection,” “Facilitate Reflection” “Maturation,” “Meditation,” and “Questions Chaplains Ask Themselves in Reflection” (which later related to and helped develop the code “seeking”). Once I spotted a pattern in the data that warranted a memo, such as the concept of connection, I generated an analytical memo that then tracked what various

³²⁰ Memo on ‘accepting’ code from the second coding pass, September 23, 2017.

³²¹ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 169.

participants said about that topic by summarizing their perspectives in my own words. This process of summarization was important to understanding the data on a deeper, internalized level that merely coding a direct quotation does not allow. This collected all of a participant's ideas on a given topic, which might be scattered throughout the entire interview, into a single, coherent summation. It also enabled me to draw out similarities and differences across participants. For example, the memo on connection states:

[Participant] talked about connection in a twofold way: 1) the connection between human beings, between chaplain and patients and families, and 2) the connection with oneself, to begin to know oneself better, to grapple with big, existential questions. I wonder if a theist might refer to that as a connection to and grappling with God, the divine, or the sacred? But [participant] talked about it in terms of the self. When we look at the topic of connection in other interviews, does this typology hold up?³²²

This early observation and the questions it generated were important in revising several large codes in the third round of focused coding, including “connecting,” “seeking,” and “watching the mind.” The memo subsequently outlined the perceptions of connection or connecting from every participant who mentioned the topic, which occurred in the vast majority of interviews. This is only a single example; the results of the memoing process are discussed in more detail as part of theory-building in chapter four.

A fourth type of analytical memo recorded various observations and hypotheses within the Atlas.ti software. These include memos on “Diluted Dharma,” “Factors that Influence Predisposition to Reflection,” “Follow-Up Interviews,” “Instrumentalizing God,” “Practice vs. Meaning in Reflection,” “Questions,” “Spectrums,” “Three *Prajñās*,” and “Three *Prajñās* at Four Stages.” According to Charmaz, these “advanced” memos trace, describe, specify, and place categories in relation to each other and the research topic in order to “sharpen”

³²² “Connection” memo, September 28, 2017.

comparisons.³²³ In my case, they are distinct from the third type, as they emerged much later in the data-analysis process, are more abstract and theoretical than prior memos, and tend to concern groups of codes, rather than individual codes. These memos and the thought processes they recorded are explored in further detail in the following chapters. They served an important role in developing the five theoretical hypotheses, Framework, and thesis.

While Atlas.ti offers the opportunity to code and analyze memos generated in relation to this data (and the first set of memos recorded in Word could have likewise been uploaded to Atlas.ti and coded), I declined to make use of this function. I found sufficient data for theoretical coding and validation of my theoretical framework and thesis in the primary data collected directly from participants.

It can sometimes be useful to code analytical memos to compare researcher reflexivity and objectivity to the original data set, but in this case, I felt it unnecessary after having tested my hypotheses and Framework via follow-up interviews and peer review. (See chapter four for more detail on these responses.) Had the results of the follow-up interviews and/or peer review been less validating, then coding and analysis of analytical memos would have been valuable to see where my thinking had diverged from the data. Given the positive responses from participants and peers though, I found this unnecessary.

Conclusion

The methods employed in this study have both benefits and drawbacks. On the one hand, they are well developed and tested by previous scholars. (I have explored their purposes and potential benefits in the sections above.) On the other hand, they have been combined here in somewhat novel (and untested) ways on a topic about which there is little prior literature against

³²³ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 170.

which to validate their use or findings. Methodological confusion is the primary drawback of this approach. This confusion results from applying practical theological methods developed in relation to Christianity and from a western intellectual tradition to a religion (Buddhism) that is, in many ways, very different and arises from an eastern intellectual tradition that does not share many of the foundations upon which practical theologians have traditionally based their work (Aristotle being just one example).

Some confusion may also stem from my reluctance to fully commit to practical theological methods for which I cannot find direct justification or analogs for within the *Buddhadharma*. I am very comfortable adopting Richard Osmer's framework because it is directly comparable to the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism. I am less comfortable adopting the method of mutual critical correlation because, while it *seems* to be a suitable method (it sounds a lot like what I am doing), the way I practice it is inevitably colored by my epistemological and soteriological commitments to Buddhism over any of the western religious, philosophical, or social scientific traditions that influence David Tracy and Don Browning's original explanation and model for this method. This could constitute a new revision or alternative form of the critical correlation method.

Likewise, my use of constructivist grounded theory is colored by the Buddhist approach to language, the constructed-ness of all conceptual knowledge, teachings on causation and conditionality, emphasis on direct experience as the primary source of authority in developing wisdom (and the final source of awakening), and emphasis on reflexivity in the practitioner in relation to their own perceptions and the nature of mind. All of these concepts uphold and reinforce Charmaz's explanations and methods of grounded theory, which is why I have such a strong affinity for the constructivist model. However, these epistemological commitments are not

the same as Charmaz's epistemological commitments. They may come to similar conclusions, but they flow from very different sources. Charmaz notes that grounded theory is adaptable, as we have seen in her evolution of Glaser and Strauss's original model into her constructivist one.³²⁴ It remains useful in the face of whatever adaptations I have naively forced upon it in this study.

Methods are not value-neutral tools. They come complete with commitments to particular worldviews and embedded assumptions. Applying a set of methods developed in one context to an activity that takes place in a different context with a different operative worldview could result in the "corruption" of the ultimate findings. Indeed, this is the entire critique regarding the development of a Buddhist 'theology.'³²⁵

Although we know there is no such thing as a "pure" worldview, or even a "pure" method for that matter, critical theory has identified the dangers of applying theories developed by one population to a different population. Feminists, queer theorists, racial theorists, and others who employ critical theory in their work are mindful of these dangers. I have not employed critical theory in this study, which may be to its detriment. Instead, I have chosen methods that I find well aligned with the Dharma (though there is little scholarly work to support my viewpoint) and hoped that they would allow the data to speak for itself. I have followed the classical Buddhist path of resorting to direct experience to validate (or critique) the Dharma and resorting to the Dharma to help understand direct experience.³²⁶ Wherever possible, I have attempted to

³²⁴ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 16.

³²⁵ See Payne, "Why 'Buddhist Theology' is Not a Good Idea."

³²⁶ For a further explanation of this process (as one example), see Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "Wings to Awakening: Part I," trans. Geoffrey DeGraff, *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, last modified November 30, 2013, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/wings/part1.html>.

maintain reflexivity and note my own biases, assumptions, and commitments, but this task is impossible to do perfectly.

Some confusion seems an inevitable consequence of the kind of methodological construction this study generates. I am developing a way to qualitatively study the methods used by Buddhist chaplains that is, I hope, both academically sound and appropriate to the Dharma. This has never been done before, which is one of the reasons why this research is significant. The strengths of this approach include the application of a meticulous and accepted method for data collection and analysis to generate new theories where none have yet been articulated. Some new scholars in this field, such as Bhikkshuni Trinlae advocate for a full-fledged discipline of Buddhist practical theology.³²⁷ While I find many correlations between the methods of practical theology, particularly Osmer's tasks, I am not yet ready to go that far, for the reasons explored by Payne³²⁸ and others. However, lack of clarity about the boundaries and methods of some new discipline for Buddhist thought need not prevent us from moving forward with constructive projects to benefit Buddhist practitioners who are already out there doing the work, which is precisely what I have done. This research is ultimately intended to help them alleviate suffering where ever they find it and train those who will follow after.

³²⁷ Trinlae, "Prospects for a Buddhist Practical Theology."

³²⁸ Payne, "Why 'Buddhist Theology' is Not a Good Idea."

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter narrates what I learned as data was collected, coded, and analyzed via the process described in the previous chapter. It begins with a return to the research questions listed in chapter one and uses the data to answer these questions. Recall that, in this instance, “data” merely refers to what participants said in interviews or wrote in reflections. The process of coding and analyzing the data drew out prominent ideas, themes, and concerns; defined variation on various spectrums; developed relationships and hierarchies between ideas; and led to five hypotheses. These hypotheses were tested in follow-up interviews, which enabled me to collect more data on topics of interest (i.e., theoretical sampling). Ultimately, the data from these interviews informed the final theory—the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care—and the thesis, both of which are discussed in more detail in the following chapter. This chapter narrates the process that led up to the development of the Framework.

First, this chapter begins with a direct response to the research questions. Second, the prominent themes that emerged from the earliest rounds of coding (listed in chapter three) are explored in more detail. These include the importance of sharing and receiving feedback on one’s reflections, participants’ theories of Buddhist care, the process participants described of learning reflection in relation to their spiritual/religious lives and their spiritual care practices, the relationship between meditation and reflection, and other themes. In chapter five, we shall see how much of what was learned in the identification of these themes helped develop the final Framework and thesis. Third, significant concepts that emerged in later rounds of coding will be investigated and summarized. These include more detail about some of the most prominent actions Buddhist chaplains undertake, including meditating, reflecting, practicing, seeking, watching the mind, sharing, connecting, and being present with careseekers. These can be organized into two conceptual clusters, one related to the participant’s understanding of

reflection and the other related to their practice of spiritual care. Finally, this chapter reviews the five hypotheses developed from interview and reflection data and tested via follow-up interviews. The conclusion brings together several threads that contributed to the development of the Framework, which is presented in chapter five.

Research Questions

This project began with four questions. However, as a grounded theory project, I was prepared to diverge from these questions based on actual data from participants. With so little written on Buddhist chaplaincy to date and almost no literature on reflection as part of spiritual care by Buddhists, these research questions could not be justified by prior research. They were mostly fueled by my own curiosity and the Christian normative assumptions that drive chaplaincy standards.³²⁹ These questions are listed below, followed by tentative answers taken directly from the data and based on the analysis of codes and code relationships within the data.

Question One: Methods and Processes

1. What ‘theological’ methods or processes do Buddhist chaplains and chaplain interns use when reflecting on the Dharma in relation to their practice of spiritual care? How are these methods/processes similar to or distinct from methods of theological reflection employed by Christian and other theocentric chaplains?

When posing this question, I was not entirely certain I would get any coherent answers. In fact, I was not certain Buddhist chaplains would even understand the question, if it were asked directly. In my research on Christian methods of theological reflection, scholars regularly stated that even many students and graduates of Christian seminaries and universities would not be able

³²⁹ In particular, the standard that chaplains should “facilitate theological reflection in pastoral care,” as explored in chapter one.

to answer this question. Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Francis Ward write in their Introduction to *Theological Reflection: Methods* that despite many prior books on the topic, “Reality does not fit the rhetoric,” and many would-be Christian theologians find themselves baffled about how to *do* theological reflection. In Graham, Walton, and Ward’s estimation, this is due to an overemphasis on product rather than process, which their book intends to address.³³⁰ Given the trouble Christians have with this topic, despite dozens of published books and hundreds of articles, it seemed far less likely that the Buddhist chaplains in my study would be able to provide clear answers. Although I have made a comparison here between Buddhist and Christian manners of reflecting, comparison was not the primary motive behind my question.

Rather, I wanted to find authentically Buddhist methods and processes, if any exist, for reflection. I worried that couching my question in so much Christian language would make it unintelligible to my participants. Yet I did not know the analogous Buddhist terms for this process, if any even existed. As a result, I began my interviews with a somewhat oblique line of questioning, asking my participants to recall an encounter with a careseeker that really “stuck with them” and that they found themselves thinking about for some time afterward.³³¹ This line of questioning was, unfortunately, somewhat baffling and not very fruitful. Dwelling on a particularly difficult or memorable encounter with a careseeker was not, it turned out, the same as reflection. What participants described was more akin to rumination or worry and lacked any

³³⁰ Graham, Walton, and Ward. *Theological Reflection*, 1.

³³¹ At this stage, I was also influenced by grounded theory literature, which defines the nature of a grounded theory study as one that investigates what and how something happens in a relatively short period of time (i.e., a discrete incident). A single encounter with a careseeker, which may last minutes to a few hours, fit this description. However, the actual process of reflection described by study participants did not. Reflection is much more unstructured and long-term. Ultimately, I had to discard my preoccupation with this particular criterion of grounded theory study in order to revise my questions and gain better data.

particular method or process. I should not have been so concerned about asking straightforward questions. When I revised my line of questioning to become more direct, the chaplains in this study not only understood the questions; they were also very forthcoming.

The methods and processes used by Buddhist chaplains were captured by the following thematic codes: process of learning reflection, meditation and reflection, understanding the ‘theological,’ relationship to experience, purpose of reflection, and formal vs. informal reflection. In the final pass of theoretical coding, reflection methods and process were further revealed by how the codes³³² from the Chaplain Actions code group could be organized into the table below.³³³

The chaplain’s behavior can be classified according to the theoretical categories of the Three *Prajñās* Framework on Reflection in Spiritual Care as actions that contribute to wisdom developed by listening, contemplating, or practicing. The Framework describes a process of reflection used by Buddhist chaplains that begins with listening, followed by contemplating, followed by practicing to develop wisdom. Reflection follows a similar pattern of tasks based on listening, then contemplating, then practicing. The codes fall into the various stages of this process as follows:

Wisdom by Listening	Wisdom by Contemplating	Wisdom by Practicing
Being Present Censors Self Empathizes [to witness] Following CS’s Lead Going on Retreat [to hear teachings]	Challenges CS’s Behavior Consults Contemplates Correlates Focuses Discussion Helps Processing	Assessment Concerned for Effects Diffuses Conflict Empathizes [to let go of ego] Going on Retreat [to meditate] Guiding Meditation for CS

³³² Codes in this group all begin with “Chaplain...” or “Chaplain’s...,” which have been omitted here.

³³³ I began by attempting to organize some of the most obvious Chaplain Action codes into the table, such as “chaplain listens” under Wisdom by Listening and “chaplain’s assessment” under Wisdom by Practicing. Much to my surprise, it was possible to categorize all codes in this group according to this method.

Inquires Insecurities Listens Observes Questioning [to elicit sharing] Positive Regard [to witness]	Invites Interprets Tradition Is Reflexive Not-Knowing Processes Questioning [to clarify or consider] Raises Ethical Concerns Shares Reflection Stress Suggests Writes Reflection	Hope for Patient Identifies Sacred Not Fixing Positive Regard [to practice perfections/virtues] Prays Refers Respects Other Traditions Supports Spiritual Goal
--	--	---

As we can see, the theoretical categories account for all codes classifying a chaplain's actions generated in the data. Some codes overlap and appear in more than one theoretical category based on their intention or outcome. This occurs either when a particular task is versatile based on context, such as with "chaplain questioning," or when something can be both an action and a "practice"³³⁴ that contributes to a particular outcome. For example, "chaplain's positive regard" is both a mental/emotional practice and a key behavior in effective listening. A few codes, such as "chaplain's insecurities" and "chaplain's stress" capture the chaplain's reflexivity, demonstrating that chaplains are aware of their internal responses to situations (i.e., listening to the self), including encounters with careseekers, while they are occurring and carefully reflect on their ability to be present and provide care in relation to their own mental, emotional, and physical health. Based on the line of questioning for this research, I am not surprised that the majority of the codes generated by the data fall into the category of wisdom

³³⁴ The distinction between a simple action and a "practice" is one of intention and deliberate and repeated, for lack of a better term, practice. Anyone can dance, but a ballerina practices dance. Likewise, one can spontaneously have compassion when witnessing someone else's misfortune, especially when one is not otherwise preoccupied, but compassion as a practice is deliberately cultivated through meditation, even when the objects of one's compassion are not present and when one is preoccupied.

developed by contemplating, which is the category most akin to the meaning of the English word “reflection” and the practice of theological reflection as described by Christian literature.

The second half of this question, how Buddhist methods and processes compare to Christian methods of theological reflection is considered in chapter six as part of a broader discussion on the implications, applications, and limitations of the Framework. The second part of the question is for heuristic purposes, as this is not a comparative study.

Question Two: Sources of Dharma

2. What sources of Dharma are used or privileged during the process of reflection (e.g., sutras/suttas, books, teachers/teachings, and other sources beyond direct experience)?

Sources are critical to determining how and why Buddhist chaplains interpret an event and assign meaning to it. They serve as templates, models, and sources of received meaning from tradition. They also provide organizing schema, such as the Three *Prajñās*, for chaplains to employ, either consciously or subconsciously, in organizing their own reflections. The study participants identified twenty different types of sources of knowledge during this study, some of them experiential, which will be treated in the following question. The nonexperiential sources include people, written sources, auditory sources, ritual sources, and some sources that were specified by content but not medium. People include Buddhist peers and colleagues, Buddhist teachers, others with a variety of perspectives (usually CPE peers, but not always), and multidisciplinary teammates and colleagues. Written sources include contemporary books, internet research, and sacred texts. Auditory sources include Dharma talks, either via podcast or live, and meditation instruction. Ritual sources include liturgy, chants, and prayers. Other sources include, 1) Buddhist training, which includes a combination of written sources, auditory sources, ritual sources, and direct experience; 2) the field of western psychology; and 3) a code for times when chaplains noted that they were guided by their tradition in relation to a particular

idea or concern, but did not specify a particular source or type of source. Some chaplains could readily name specific authors and sources, while others were more generic, mentioning “modern books” or “the Pāli canon,” for example. Also included under the “sources of knowledge” code group were “formal education,” indicating knowledge learned in college or graduate school, and “modern concern/not in texts,” to document when chaplains acknowledged that they were unable to find a sacred or traditional source of knowledge on a topic. Some examples of specific sources are listed below, especially those mentioned by multiple participants.

Buddhist Teachers	Contemporary Books	Sacred Texts
Thich Nhat Hanh	<i>Being with Dying</i>	<i>Dīgha Nikāya Kalahavivāda Sutta</i> and <i>Mahānidāna Sutta</i>
Thanissaro Bhikkhu	<i>Mind Beyond Death</i>	Soto Zen Liturgy
Bernie Glassman	<i>Being Peace</i>	<i>Lotus Sutra</i>
Gil Fronsdal	<i>Living Buddha, Living Christ</i>	<i>Dhammapada</i>
Reb Anderson	<i>The Raft is Not the Shore</i>	<i>Sallatha Sutta</i>
John Makransky	<i>Jesus and Buddha as Brothers</i>	<i>Therigatha</i>
Willa Miller*	<i>Dead Man Walking</i>	<i>Angulimala Sutta</i>
Cheryl Giles*	<i>The Making of Buddhist</i>	<i>The Way of the Bodhisattva</i>
Janet Gyatso*	<i>Modernism</i>	<i>Vimalakirti Sutra</i>
Charles Hallisey*	<i>Man’s Search for Meaning</i>	<i>Shōbōgenzō</i>
Joan Halifax*		<i>Heart Sutra</i>
Judith Simmer-Brown*		<i>Avatamsaka Sutra</i>
Sarah Harding*		Lojong teachings
Scott Mitchell*		

*Faculty in a Buddhist chaplaincy program

Participants also listed non-Buddhist psychologists, philosophers, religious teachers, and religious traditions among their sources, such as Søren Kierkegaard, Heinz Kohut, liberation theology, Catholic teachings on confession, Quaker practices, and Integral Yoga. However, I did not discern any particular patterns in these sources; they seem to be based on the background and interests of the various participants. This data demonstrates that the chaplains in this study, for the most part, are well-educated and well-read not only in their own Buddhist traditions, but also in other Buddhist traditions, other religions, and modern cognate fields, such as psychology. This aligns with the theoretical category of wisdom developed from listening (or, in this case, reading)

that is part of the Framework. While the details of where Buddhist chaplains derive this wisdom are interesting enough for future scholarly study, at the moment, no further significance has been theorized.

Question Three: Role of Experience

3. What is the relationship between one's own experience as a chaplain or chaplain intern and one's understanding of the Dharma and how is it articulated?

The importance of experience emerged as a theme in the first few interviews and in the first coding pass. This theme was further articulated through later analysis. Of the twenty sources of knowledge identified, six were experiential. These included the action-reflection-action model of learning commonly used in CPE, which multiple chaplains referenced both positively and negatively (see chapter five for more on this); Buddhist training, which often includes a strong experiential component; the chaplain's direct experience; the chaplain's spiritual or mystical experiences; previous experiences with careseekers, which is often the topic of formal reflections during CPE; and the chaplain's spiritual practice, which usually refers to meditation and other ritual or contemplative exercises, including retreat practice. In some cases, chaplains preferred their own experience to external sources. When asked about sources that were useful in their reflection process, one participant said:

I would say that for me they are more experiential sources rather than kind of uh, academic or literature or philosophical. ... I think some of the philosopher that I come into contact with, it's entertaining and engrossing, but I find it pretty heady, or kind of intellectual and rational. And I find I get more confused or kind of derailed if I try and view it in that aspect. I think it's been important, and uh, kind of trying to motivate my interest and broaden my perspective. But it's really, like, I guess the more experiential somatic ... in touch with the breadth of the feelings, that have been more useful, in the chaplain setting in particular.³³⁵

³³⁵ Interview 002, June 22, 2017.

Even chaplains who could readily name other sources of knowledge, such as books or scriptures, looked to their own experiences for guidance and verification. One chaplain described how he was profoundly impacted by the *Avatamsaka Sutra* when he directly experienced one of its key phrases, “one is all, all is one,” while walking in the park.³³⁶ While he had known the phrase, the mystical experience it described had a much more lasting impact on his spiritual path, eventually leading him to become a chaplain and make service the basis of his spiritual care practice.

In addition, chaplains draw knowledge from their experiences and locate “authority” within those experiences. Authority in this sense connotes an experience that conveys expertise, confidence, and, in some sense, “authorization” to act as a spiritual caregiver or teacher;³³⁷ it is not about power over others. When called upon to describe how they saw the divine in an encounter, one chaplain struggled with the idea of an external source of authority:

You know, I'm always curious and I think I locate authority in experience. Like, what's the experience of that? ...the direction of looking inward, looking at experience, my experience, the patient's experience. And so, that methodology existing in me and then needing to translate that into – How can I talk about some sort of external being?³³⁸

The view that Buddhists locate authority in direct experience was affirmed in follow-up interviews. One participant described the authority of direct experience as “A sense of verified faith. I’m comfortable in my own skin, and you know I'm pretty certain that I'm a lifelong

³³⁶ Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

³³⁷ This tradition within Buddhism can be traced back to the enlightenment of the Buddha. When called on to prove his awakening, the Buddha touched the earth, and the earth shook in witness of his spiritual authority. That authority derived from his experience of perfect wisdom and compassion; it was not conveyed by any other authority, either human or divine. See “Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta,” <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.than.html>.

³³⁸ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

Dharma practitioner at this point, you know. So that forms the authority of direct experience. It feels very resonant.”³³⁹

Study participants described their experiences as providing insight into various phenomena, including traditionally Buddhist topics such as conditionality, emptiness, or equanimity; topics related to factors and situations affecting careseekers, such as grief, addiction recovery, or mental illness; topics directly related to how they provide spiritual care, such as being present, being authentic (particularly as a Buddhist), or diffusing conflict; and, finally, things they learned from their interactions with careseekers, such as strength derived from the love of family or the fluid nature of self-identity. Moreover, deriving authority from experience is upheld within the Buddhist scriptures. Chaplains cited the *Kalama Sutta*, which famously tells the story of the Buddha speaking to a Kalama village, the people of which were confused by the contradictory teachings of various aesthetics:

So, as I said, Kalamas: “Don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, ‘This contemplative is our teacher.’ When you know for yourselves that, ‘These qualities are skillful; these qualities are blameless; these qualities are praised by the wise; these qualities, when adopted & carried out, lead to welfare & to happiness’—then you should enter & remain in them.”³⁴⁰

While David McMahan points out that this teaching has often been carried to an individualistic extreme in modern western Buddhism,³⁴¹ the *sutta* represents a pervasive understanding among the Buddhists in this study. It is also just one example of canonical scripture and modern Buddhist teaching that encourages Buddhists to look for the truth of the

³³⁹ Follow-up Interview 005, October 11, 2017.

³⁴⁰ “Kalama Sutta: To the Kalamas” (AN 3.65), trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, last modified November 30, 2013, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/an/an03/an03.065.than.html>.

³⁴¹ McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 279.

Dharma in the fruits of their practice, which is only gained through direct experience. Thus, Buddhists who prioritize direct experience are simultaneously prioritizing a traditional³⁴² understanding of Buddhism.

Question Four: Outcomes

4. How does the practice of reflecting on the Dharma and one's own experience change their practice of spiritual care? In other words, what interventions do Buddhist chaplains and chaplain interns develop from their reflective practices and what effects do they have?

This was the most difficult of the four questions to answer clearly and categorically. Some responses to this question emerged early under the thematic code, "change in care due to reflection," or appeared in the intermediate passes under the code, "learning," but, ultimately, there was no clean, clear-cut way to categorize this data. Responses alluded to specific instances in which the chaplains in this study learned something either profound or pragmatic, which lead to a change in behavior. There were many such instances in the data.

For example, a chaplain for whom English is a second language learned not to say, "May you rest peacefully," to a patient in the hospital.³⁴³ Several chaplains reported gaining confidence, especially in their identity as Buddhists, as a result of reflecting on careseeker encounters. Another chaplain reported a profound experience of *samsara*, the cycle of suffering, after a chaotic encounter with a family in the emergency department and how being able to put

³⁴² "Traditional" in the sense that this is what they were taught by their particular teachers and lineages within the last two decades, but perhaps not aligned with more conservative and authoritative versions of Buddhism.

³⁴³ Interview 003, June 2, 2017; this chaplain was not aware that "May you rest in peace" is traditionally said to the dead and that this statement may imply they believed the patient was going to die.

that into words helped them recognize their own triggers in subsequent encounters.³⁴⁴ The encounters described and the changes these encounters produced varied widely. However, all of these individual moments of learning, growth, and change seemed to lead to a similar place—spiritual friendship—for all of the chaplains participating in this study.

The most comprehensive response to this question is that Buddhist chaplains learn, as a result of their reflective practices, how to accompany others as a spiritual friend when providing spiritual care. As a spiritual friend, they are able to practice reflection for themselves and facilitate spiritual, existential, or ‘theological’ reflection for others during spiritual care. The process leading to the development of spiritual friendship is well documented in chapter five as part of The Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care. The specific behaviors of a spiritual friend (e.g., interventions) and the effects of those behaviors on both careseekers and chaplains is documented in the following chapter and have also been classified in the table under Question One, above.

In brief, the spiritual friend is an altruistic companion to those on a spiritual path or during a time of suffering. The spiritual friend is present for the sake of the other in a way that allows the spiritual friend’s sense of self to recede into the background, opening space for the other to speak, to be heard, to explore, to emote, to understand, to grow, to make decisions, or to clarify their own wisdom in an empowering and supportive way. Spiritual friends are capable of assessing spiritual needs and appropriately responding to the situation based on the needs of the individual, sometimes in pragmatic ways and sometimes in more abstract, but also deeply meaningful, ways. Through this process, the careseeker feels genuinely witnessed and strengthened; the careseeker may take the opportunity to clarify values, goals, and make

³⁴⁴ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

decisions. Meanwhile, by focusing on the other, the chaplain experiences the Buddhist practice of nonattachment to self, deepening their own wisdom and leading to liberation from suffering. In this way, spiritual friendship is the ‘whole’ of the holy life,³⁴⁵ leading to liberation from suffering both for the spiritual friend and those whom they accompany.

Development of Themes

This study began with the four questions above, but, as usual with such scholarly work, various other themes also emerged organically during the research process. I categorized these themes early in the coding process, and they helped me adapt the line of questions I used in interviews, develop various code sets for analytically exploring the data, develop the five hypotheses, and led to the final Framework described in chapter five.

Thirteen initial thematic codes are listed in chapter three and referenced in relation to the research questions above. In this section, I will explore them narratively, linking them to one another, to the theoretical memos they generated, and to later codes and ideas. As a reminder, the thirteen thematic codes are: sharing reflection and feedback, theory of Buddhist care, process of learning reflection, meditation and reflection, sources, written reflection, change in care due to reflections, understanding ‘theological,’ recurrent ideas in reflection, relationship to experience, purpose of reflection, formal vs. informal reflection, and soteriological goals. These thematic codes were only applied to the initial interviews, which provided copious data on each, easily achieving data saturation of these categories.

The most populous thematic code was “sharing reflection and feedback,” which contributed to the thesis of this research. Part of that thesis states that chaplains who, at some point in their own spiritual formation, were accompanied by spiritual friends are better able to

³⁴⁵ “Upaddha Sutta,” <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn45/sn45.002.than.html>.

become spiritual friends and accompany careseekers later. Sharing one's reflections with spiritual friends and receiving feedback from them is a major aspect of accompaniment. Participants reported sharing reflections and receiving feedback primarily within the context of CPE, which is where my interview questions originally focused. Participants reported mixed results from sharing their reflections in CPE, with most citing the experience as pivotal to their growth, some finding it incidental, and others finding it challenging. Sometimes the challenge was understood positively, as growth-inducing, even if uncomfortable, but sometimes it also limited their spiritual formation, particularly as Buddhist chaplains.

As the interviews continued, it became clear that several participants had significant experience sharing their reflections and receiving feedback prior to or outside of CPE. In some cases, these experiences seemed to have an even greater impact on the chaplain's ability to act as a spiritual friend than the CPE process itself. Sharing reflections and receiving feedback in CPE often had a very pragmatic agenda—to make the participant a better chaplain by improving their spiritual care skills—whereas sharing reflections and receiving feedback outside of CPE tended to focus more on the spiritual formation of the chaplain as a person, thereby exhibiting more of the characteristics of spiritual friendship. This is not to say that CPE supervisors and peers are not interested in the chaplain's spiritual formation, only that they are interested in more than that. Moreover, peers who are themselves still forming may not yet always be able to act as spiritual friends (just as the chaplains in this study had to learn that skill).

Religious difference also served as both a benefit and a barrier in this process. Chaplains valued the feedback from and viewpoints of their interreligious peers, yet they also often struggled to explain Buddhist concepts and receive meaningful feedback on their own spiritual growth in relation to their Buddhist worldviews. When a spiritual friend of another religious

tradition genuinely accompanied them, it had a lasting and profound effect, but this kind of accompaniment was uncommon, especially among their CPE peers (though it was more common with CPE supervisors). Spiritual friendship was more common within Buddhist institutions, including *sanghas* and universities with significant Buddhist teacher and student populations. In the latter case, having a critical mass of Buddhist students and faculty may ensure that non-Buddhist students and faculty also have sufficient exposure to and knowledge of Buddhism to act as spiritual friends, obviating the need to keep reflections at a surface level, as participants reported having to do in CPE, while also reaping the benefits of spiritual friendship across differing religions. This is conjecture on my part and needs further research, but it aligns with the data.

While I identified spiritual friendship as a key paradigm for facilitating reflection in pastoral care and accompanying those in distress, many of the study participants did so as well. Four chaplains explicitly referenced spiritual friendship, or the notion of *kalyāṇamitra*, mentioned in chapter two in relation to Stephen Clarke's article on pastoral counseling. Five more spoke about friends who have supported them in their spiritual practice during their lives, who, in my judgment, meet the criteria of spiritual friendship. All participants in this study described behaviors that align with spiritual friendship during their work as a chaplain, though they may not have explicitly referenced it as such. The paradigm of spiritual friendship is common to all branches of Buddhism, though it may not always be explicitly referenced in core teachings, depending on lineage.

The chaplains in this study also identified a number of other models and teachings within the Dharma that fueled their practice of spiritual care. They cited paradigms for spiritual care that included 1) the *pāramitās* or perfections, especially the perfections of compassion, loving-

kindness, and equanimity; 2) having a basis in mindfulness or meditation practice; 3) chaplaincy as a response to suffering as understood via the Four Noble Truths; and 4) for Mahayana and Vajrayana chaplains, the model of the *bodhisattva* was also important. Participants often combined these themes when describing their work:

Researcher: So how do you see your Buddhist practice or your Buddhist religion as related to your work as a chaplain? How do you see that relationship between the two?

Participant: Um, well for one thing, it helps me deal with the reality of suffering. I mean, the First Noble Truth is that life is suffering, uh, *dukkha*. And, of course, I explain to both my patients and my CPE colleagues that *dukkha* here in Buddhism it stems beyond just physical pain, but also emotional, psychological, and spiritual pain. And so that's the First Noble Truth in Buddhism. And so, in the hospital setting or in various chaplaincy setting [sic], we are exposed to suffering on a daily basis. We are exposed to trauma, to suffering, to cancer, to death on a daily basis, and so the Buddhist theology and scriptures, because it's the First Noble Truth, hopefully helps patients and myself come to terms with that. And some patients, some are Buddhists, some are not, even ask questions about that, and so I utilize Buddhist First Noble Truth teaching to help them come to terms with that. ...there's also practices that help alleviate some of these suffering [sic], you know, the Noble Eightfold Path, meditation, and because I'm in secular setting [sic], I try to apply my meditation in a way that's accessible and secular. I don't infuse Buddhist motifs or theology behind it, but just approach it in a way where it's mindfulness, it's breathing exercises that help alleviate and calm people down in their times of distress.³⁴⁶

Many chaplains described a strong meditation or mindfulness component to their spiritual care work that aligned with Cheryl Giles and Willa Miller's description of Buddhist chaplaincy as "contemplative" care (explored in chapter two). For example, one participant said, "But in terms of just showing up [with careseekers], being real, being in the moment, learning how to be present, stay in my body, and meet suffering with love. That's exactly what I do on the [meditation] cushion too."³⁴⁷ Mindfulness and compassion in the face of suffering were strong

³⁴⁶ Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

³⁴⁷ Interview 005, July 15, 2017.

themes in the chaplains' understanding of spiritual care based on all traditions of Buddhism. For Mahayana and Vajrayana chaplains, the *bodhisattva* model and various contemplative practices nuanced responses to that theme without significantly altering it.

Chaplains described how their meditation practice informed their work as chaplains and how their spiritual care practice informed their meditation. Most participants described long-standing and ongoing meditation practices, though some confessed that their work now left less time for it than they would desire on a daily basis. Many made time for it within their work in hospitals and other settings, often with careseekers, staff, or just for themselves. For example, one described how the practices they learned prior to becoming a chaplain are now useful in the hospital setting:

I would be in the elevator and I would come in and offer a smile to all the staff and everyone else just have a serious gaze [sic]. They look down and they got on their smartphones. And I remember my first unit, to help me cope with all the emotions that arose, I had to apply my meditation practices, you know? So, when I walked I was aware of my walk, my steps. These are the things we learn in Deer Park, in Thích Nhất Hạnh tradition. And of course, you know, I sat in meditation for maybe thirty minutes before the group meets, sometimes after. These are concrete practices to help me deal with my emotions...one meditation practice to help me be aware, to be mindful, to be present with both my emotions and my patient's emotions. And for me, it feels, one, I get to be spiritual and apply my spiritual practice, and, you know, build connection with people, and that feels, for me it felt very magical, you know?³⁴⁸

The thematic code for “meditation and reflection” had a great deal of overlap with other codes, including “watching the mind,” “being present,” “reflecting,” and “suffering.” In the last case, mindfulness is used to be aware of suffering, to remain present for suffering rather than turning away from suffering, and to help cope with suffering, especially when processing difficult emotions, such as the participant above mentioned. The concentration and awareness

³⁴⁸ Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

developed through meditative practice also helped chaplains be more aware of what was happening in their encounters with careseekers, including their internal responses, and provided material for later reflection and contemplation. This fueled participants' learning process and spiritual formation.

Chaplains' understanding of reflection itself was captured in many codes, including the thematic codes "process of learning reflection," "purpose of reflection," "written reflection," and "formal vs. informal reflection." Most participants reflected on their spiritual or religious life prior to graduate school and training in spiritual care. Levels of formality, structure, and engagement with reflection varied considerably based on numerous factors. All chaplains engaged in a more formal process of reflection first in graduate school, though to varying degrees, and certainly in CPE. Some found reflection during CPE more or less difficult depending on their personal background with reflection and the nature of their CPE cohort, as mentioned above. Learning or practicing reflection on one's spiritual/religious life in an interreligious setting or with a mentor from another religious background often led to more ease and engagement with reflection during CPE and provided a strong model of spiritual friendship. One participant described an interreligious reflection group that was instrumental in her development as a young adult and contributed to her decision to return to graduate school to study religion and later become a chaplain.

We would meet every week, and I was one of the younger students among older students who were very involved in kind of radical causes. And, um, that was, I think that was really the first time I had a lot more reflection about my own spirituality...I mean, they were Catholic students mostly, but very kind of open, and we would have a lot of group circle practice where we'd talk about like what's going on in our lives and our struggles and sharing, um, that kind of sharing our struggles together. And that, I think, was the first spiritual community I had, I would say, in a deeper

way. And we would reflect on spirituality in a very open way, again, and learn a lot about, you know, social justice issues.³⁴⁹

The process of learning reflection tended to follow a trajectory described by the Framework in the following chapter. Most participants began to reflect on their own spiritual or religious lives as teenagers or adults (some as late as their fifties). In the case of two participants raised in particularly devout families, this process began as children and involved a strong communal element from an early age. For the other participants, however, there was usually a period of individual exploration and reflection that preceded joining a Buddhist community. Both non-Asian and Asian-origin Buddhists frequently explored several different Buddhist groups before joining a community³⁵⁰ and entering a formal student-teacher relationship. At this point, learning to practice reflection took on a communal element, as participants shared their reflections, were guided by teachers and mentors, and received feedback from spiritual friends.

This process is captured in the descriptions of “stage one: self” and “stage two: student” of the Framework in chapter five. These stages are followed by “stage three: chaplain,” in which the participants begin providing spiritual care to others, usually as part of a CPE program, and reflecting on this process to improve their skills and spiritual formation as chaplains. The Framework culminates in “stage four: spiritual friend,” in which chaplains are able to facilitate reflection in spiritual care through the process of accompanying others as a spiritual friend.

Many chaplains associated reflection with their own learning processes and facilitating reflection for careseekers as a form of spiritual support. However, some chaplains still struggled

³⁴⁹ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

³⁵⁰ As the demographics detailed in chapter three show, only two participants practice in the same Buddhist tradition as their family members, while four practice in different Buddhist traditions than their Buddhist family members. Many were raised by non-Buddhist family members. These demographics did not strictly follow ethnic lines (i.e., Asians also had Christian or other non-Buddhist family, and non-Asians also had Buddhist family members).

to grasp the overall purpose of reflection or facilitate it for careseekers, especially theistic careseekers, as they felt unqualified to do so. Some chaplains seemed to conflate reflection and meditation, or at least blur the boundaries between them. For example, one participant inquired:

Participant: I'm not sure what you mean by practicing reflection.

Researcher: Well, how do you understand that word, "reflection?"

Participant: Well, there's of course the Christian view of it where I usually hear "reflection." I don't really hear reflection in the context of Buddhism, or at least in my form of Buddhism very often. So, I'm struggling a little bit about what you mean by that. I mean my practice is not a Christian reflection of, of, you know, reading the Bible and reflecting upon it. It's not that, it's not my practice...I think in my approach, meditative perception might be a more accurate term than reflection, and it's hard to describe this. It's more of, of doing, you know, going in, quieting the mind, and reviewing the mind for the three first deep meditative perceptions³⁵¹ that in the earliest parts of the canon appear to be considered perceptions...It's more like "how does my mind work and how do I create suffering for myself?" And so, um, and it's really not a reflection. You know, it can be a verbal reflection like that, but most of the time it's emotional. The practice is basically not so much intellectual, but a giving up emotionally of the things that we cling to. So, I'm not really sure what you mean by reflection in that context. Maybe I've sort of answered that, but you know...³⁵²

As we shall see in the following chapter, both meditative activities and cognitive activities commonly associated with reflection (e.g., thinking, analysis, connecting, evaluating, etc.) belong to the category of wisdom developed by contemplation.³⁵³ This is because skills

³⁵¹ Based on other statements within this interview, I believe this participant is referring to the attainment of *jhānas*, or states of meditative absorption and the perceptions that one associates with those states. However, not being an expert in the *jhānas*, I was not able to correlate this reference ("three first deep meditative perceptions") to any term or description within the various Buddhist dictionaries and references.

³⁵² Interview 012, August 10, 2017; I believe it is no coincidence that this participant was also the only one who did not demonstrate evidence of stage four: spiritual friendship in their interview data. The perception of "reflection" as a solely Christian activity and not something Buddhists do may be hindering their ability to facilitate reflection for others. This is only my conjecture, however.

³⁵³ The Three *Prajñās* being wisdom developed by listening, wisdom developed by contemplating, and wisdom developed by practicing. See chapter five for further discussion.

developed through meditation, particularly concentration and mindfulness, are commonly employed during cognitive tasks such as reflection. Moreover, *vipaśyanā*, or insight meditation, also carries an analytical component.³⁵⁴ Therefore, it is not surprising that the chaplains in this study spoke of reflection and meditation as interconnected or, in some cases, indistinguishable. (This appears to be unique to Buddhist teaching; I do not find a similar emphasis on awareness, mindfulness, concentration, or mental cultivation in Christian literature on theological reflection.)

Fundamentally, the purpose of reflection and meditation in Buddhist tradition are the same: awakening. This purpose was also captured by the thematic code, “soteriological goals,” and various other values codes, including “liberation from suffering,” “enlightenment,” and “*nirvāṇa*.” Awakening is achieved through direct experience of ultimate truth or the nature of reality as empty of inherent existence—as impermanent and interdependent—and the nature of the self as nonself—likewise empty, impermanent, and interdependent. One participant described this poignantly in relation to the aspects of the Dharma that help with their work as a chaplain:

I mean emptiness teachings. I feel like it's so easy to get really deep into this idea of like, “I'm the helper, and I'm helping others,” or “Now I feel helpless and I need help.” But just the emptiness of, and the transitoriness [sic] of these roles. Like, how to have good professional boundaries and personal boundaries, while also realizing that all of these identities are transitory and empty of an inherent nature. Just holding that. It's been really important for me personally at the end of every meeting to dedicate the merit and, you know, in my tradition there's like a dissolution visualization, like letting it all dissolve back into the *dharmakāya*³⁵⁵ and having a sense of like, “Okay. It's real and none of that is stuck and none of that is fixed, and how to let go of even the way that I'm thinking about all of it.” Like, so engaging actively with that, and that comes up even in,

³⁵⁴ See “*śamathavipaśyanā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 747.

³⁵⁵ The “truth” body of the Buddha (i.e., wisdom and compassion), the qualities that make one a buddha. For more, see “*dharmakāya*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 246.

or especially in very difficult patient encounters when I have a sense of like what's happening and I have all this analysis and like, you know, I've tried all these different things and none of them have worked and I'm just like, "This person's so frustrating," and, "Why can't I help them?" And then I'm just like, "Ugh." There's just like a kind of release valve, you know? And then I can respond in the most appropriate way 'cause I'm no longer so like full of myself [laughs]. So yeah, emptiness teachings. And that, you know applies to just being open to the multiplicity of views on any given situation by all the people in the room, you know?³⁵⁶

These concepts will be explored in more detail in chapter five.

One of the most interesting interview questions was about how participants understood the term 'theological' and, by extension, the practice of 'theological' reflection. Responses varied from complete acceptance, to translation or redefinition, to outright rejection of the term. The chaplains defined this term in various ways, from the most literal definition as "study of" (-ology) or "words about" (logos) God, gods, or the Divine (theo-); to much broader definitions encompassing "worldview" or "spirituality" as a whole.

Those who tended to accept or reinterpret the term simply broadened its meaning, sometimes at the suggestion of their CPE supervisors. One participant reported, "The [CPE] supervisor said, called it, uh, it should be a worldview, Buddhist worldview. I like it, so I'm writing for the self-evaluation, I replace the term theology with the worldview, and so I'm comfortable about that. [sic]"³⁵⁷

Those who rejected it either replaced it with "Dharmic" or "Buddhist," or simply described how it did not apply to their own reflection (though it may apply to the reflection they facilitate for careseekers) and that there was no analogous term within Buddhism. Those who advocated for the latter response also tended to take a stand against the normative assumption

³⁵⁶ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

³⁵⁷ Interview 003, June 2, 2017.

that Buddhism ought to have an analogous term and to point out the danger of such assumptions.

As one participant cogently put it:

So, this [theology] is a loaded term, right? [Richard Payne], you may have seen papers by him, thinks the term “Buddhist theology” should be banned from discourse, because he’s responding to it on a literal level, right? I am, I guess you can of a progressive level [sic] or whatever. I get that technically, theologizing is impossible for someone who holds strictly to the tenets of Buddhist because God isn’t a huge part of those tenets. There’s no “theo-” to “-logize” over. I actually made a little bit of a big deal about that the first couple of weeks [of CPE], then I made sure they knew I was doing a translation whenever we used that word. It was like, this is, we can call it a Dharmology, which is a hideous, you know, neologism, but like, it’s an interpretive spiritual framework. That’s what we’re talking about, is skillfully interpreting spiritual frameworks. And once I’ve made my point and everyone got it, I just dropped it and I’ve been using the word theology, but I needed them to know that even that was foreign.³⁵⁸

Objections to applying the concept of ‘theology’ to Buddhism are explored in much greater detail by Richard Payne’s article referenced in chapter two, with which this participant is clearly familiar.³⁵⁹ Although they eventually acquiesced to the term, they felt it was important for their cohort to understand it was an imposition and not native to the Dharma. Buddhist chaplains were willing to work with the term as a consequence of the interreligious nature of the profession and out of respect for the theistic chaplains who laid the groundwork for chaplaincy in the western world. However, they commonly associated the term with God and Divinity, two concepts not meaningful to them except inasmuch as they are meaningful to careseekers. In that respect, theological reflection was important to help others do, but not important to do oneself. One chaplain shared their exasperation:

Participant: Going to [a non-Buddhist university], I’m like, “Why does everything have to be about God?” So.

Researcher: Oh, I’ve asked that so many times.

³⁵⁸ Interview 005, July 15, 2017.

³⁵⁹ Payne, “Why ‘Buddhist Theology’ is Not a Good Idea.”

Participant: I like, my head, I'm shaking my head in my hand.

Researcher: [laughs] Yeah.

Participant: The whole time I was there...[sigh]³⁶⁰

The thematic code for “understanding ‘theology’” often correlated with the codes for “God/Divinity,” “interreligious,” “broadening,” “struggling,” and “interpreting.” Some chaplains bluntly stated that they didn’t feel qualified to help careseekers do theological reflection because of their lack of knowledge about God. One chaplain reported:

As I said earlier, I’m not specifically trying to help them find the answer to the big questions like, “Why me? Why it happened?” because I’m not a Christian. I’m not familiar with the Christian theology, so I’m not going into that area and also, I do not want to push my Buddhist of belief or faith to them [sic]. So, except for the case that I was physically asked to tell them about my Buddhist thoughts and I just express my wishes, yeah. Someday, they will come up with the answer.³⁶¹

Nevertheless, there were times when this same participant reported instances of accompanying careseekers as a spiritual friend, a process that facilitates reflection (whether theological or not) and supports careseekers in discerning their own wisdom based on their religion, culture, and life experiences. While they may not have been comfortable answering direct questions on topics in which they felt they lacked knowledge, they were still able to accompany careseekers by offering a calm presence in the midst of uncertainty, posing open-ended questions, saying prayers, and other activities of spiritual friendship. It may be that they believe what they are doing does not qualify as facilitating ‘theological’ reflection due to the Christian overtones of this phrase. This is my own conjecture about this participant, and it is explored further in relation to overall trends in the data in chapter five.

³⁶⁰ Interview 004, June 1, 2017.

³⁶¹ Follow-up Interview 003, October 5, 2017.

Investigation of Significant Concepts

Several significant concepts emerged during the interviews, coding passes, and analysis, including how participants understood the term “reflection.” Some asked for a definition. Some simply spoke about how they understood the term, and that understanding was not consistent across participants. I have already discussed how many participants conflated aspects of reflection and meditation and why that approach may be consistent with the Dharma (see chapter five for more on this). However, some participants were also concerned that reflection might lead to “fabrication” or “discursiveness.” Meanwhile, other participants talked about how their process of spiritual reflection has changed over time, including defining what constitutes “mature” versus “immature” reflection. “Seeking” also emerged as an important concept that would go on to define the intentions with which participants engaged in the Three *Prajñās*, especially the intentions with which they developed wisdom based on contemplating at various stages of the Framework. “Fabrication,” “maturity,” “seeking,” “meditation,” “practicing,” “experiencing,” “learning,” “interpreting,” and other codes are part of a cluster of concepts centered around the topic of reflection.

Another cluster of concepts emerged around encounters with careseekers. The most prominent code in this group was “connecting,” followed closely by “being present.” Whether or not one was present for careseekers and thus able to connect with them was a frequent topic of participants’ reflections and informed the third and fourth stages of the Framework (see chapter five). Several other codes joined this cluster, including “compassion,” “openness,” “listening,” “letting go,” “not-knowing,” “authenticity,” “intentional,” “accepting,” “observing,” “empathizing,” “equanimity,” and others. This cluster defines a set of characteristic traits and behaviors participants cultivated as spiritual caregivers, and it later informed aspects of the

Framework related to wisdom derived from listening and wisdom derived from practicing during the third (chaplain) and fourth (spiritual friend) stages.

A third group of concepts emerged as chaplains critiqued their CPE experience. Some of these concerns have been shared above and will be reviewed later. They include both positive and negative experiences, captured by codes such as “interreligious,” “supporting,” “learning,” “interpreting,” “getting feedback,” “challenging,” “authenticity,” “processing,” “isolation,” “many right ways,” “clarity,” “theist perspective,” “minimized/misunderstood,” “encouragement,” “confusion,” “confidence,” “missing,” and others. As critiquing CPE is not the primary purpose of this study, I shall not further explore this cluster here, except as aspects have already been reported in this chapter and are explored in chapter five. However, I hope to publish a paper on this topic at a future date, and I encourage research by others in this area.

Below, I explore the first two clusters: concepts related to reflection and concepts related to spiritual care.

Concepts Related to Reflection

Participants understood reflection or the act of reflecting in various ways. One participant said of the interview process itself, “I’m reflecting as we speak.”³⁶² Reflecting had the following meanings and connotations to the study participants. First, it involves an aspect of recollection, or looking back at what has previously happened. Often, this is to understand the connections between causes and effects. Participants compare what has just occurred to other prior events to look for broader patterns. Mindfulness, including awareness of one’s inner experience, was an important tool in being able to later recall with accuracy what had happened. In this respect, it is about one’s own experiences. Sometimes it is about understanding an experience, and sometimes

³⁶² Interview 002, June 22, 2017.

it is about letting go of a difficult experience one cannot change (or even understand), which leads into the next connotation of reflection.

Second, reflecting is a way to make or find meaning in events and activities. Sometimes this was described as achieving clarity, wisdom, integrity, or understanding. Chaplains would explore or reconcile multiple perspectives, clarify and articulate their own intentions, and learn how to better act on those intentions, either in relation to cultivating virtue (i.e., *pāramitās*) or skillful means (i.e., *upāya*). One participant said, “As chaplains, [if] we can’t reflect on what we’re doing and how we’re helping people, and, you know, how we’re sometimes, how sometimes we’re not helping people, then we are less effective, and we are less capable of dealing with the issues that come up, dealing with the challenges everyone faces.”³⁶³ Reflection was much more powerful and memorable when participants had a personal interest in making meaning of something, versus when reflection was simply assigned. In the latter case, some participants described just going through the motions to please others (including during CPE), not necessarily to contribute to their own growth. At other times, reflecting at the behest of someone else, specially someone the participants respected, could lead to meaningful growth.

Third, reflection contributes (or should contribute) to one’s spiritual formation. It helps one process one’s emotions, especially in relation to past and present suffering, trauma, illness, injury, death, and grief. It also helps one understand the nature of self/nonself and deal with one’s own ego and identity. Participants spoke about how their work as chaplains enriched their meditation and overall spiritual growth and that reflection had helped them derive meaningful insights from their work. This is where chaplains most often reported coming into conversation with the Dharma. Some chaplains found the process of reflection, especially when shared, to be

³⁶³ Interview 007, June 29, 2017.

affirming and empowering, especially as it related to their identity and authenticity as Buddhist chaplains. Finding language to describe one's experiences and communicate it to others assists with both achieving clarity or insight and with reconciling to one's own personal narrative about who one is in relation to others. One chaplain said, "You know, we can just be so lonely and alienated in our experiences that having reflection and developing language can offer so much connection,"³⁶⁴ so the themes of reflection and connection, one of the cluster of topics explored in the next section, are linked.

Fourth, reflection can be carried out through various mechanisms, including cognition, emotion, meditation, conversation, writing, and rereading what one has previously written to consider it again. Reflection utilizes many of the same skills cultivated through meditation, such as mindfulness, awareness, and concentration, but it also uses other skills, especially when one is constructing a reflection to be shared with others. In this case, participants reported that the process of writing and sharing reflections during CPE helped them improve their ability to clarify and articulate meaning. It also forced them to really dedicate time to thinking about issues, which is not always easy in the midst of busy lives. Sharing reflections, whether in CPE or elsewhere, was a powerful process for learning and growth. Sharing provided chaplains with access to viewpoints they would not be able to achieve on their own. Feedback was also a topic of later reflection.

A few participants were concerned that the reflection process could lead to fabrication of meaning "that wasn't there" or to discursiveness, a mind that wanders unskillfully from subject to subject. The latter has the connotation of *auddhatya*, or restlessness (of mind), one of the five

³⁶⁴ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

hindrances to attaining *jhana*, a state of meditative absorption on the path to awakening.³⁶⁵

(*Jhana* is discussed further in chapter five.) One participant in particular seemed very concerned with avoiding fabrication and discursiveness, to the point where they were reluctant to engage in any interpretation of spiritual care encounters and tended to describe their reflections as journalistic reports, detailing only what actually happened in the encounter. This predisposition was influenced by a particular form of Buddhist practice, the Zen study of *koans* with a teacher.³⁶⁶ *Koan* study is the study of short cases or stories that are often similar to riddles or have a nonintuitive outcome.³⁶⁷ This participant related the experience of being with a careseeker to the experience of *koan* study and their teacher's guidance:

Participant: I was always like, you know, trying to take in the moment [during a spiritual care encounter], as is, just raw state. And just notice when I might be wanting to interpret something. And I think there's like a moment of like interpretation, but, you know, I guess what I was scared of was like trying to make something out of something that it wasn't. You know, I guess, my meditation teacher is like, you know we work on these koans and I had these answers and he'll be like, you know, "You're interpreting still. You're still interpreting and still looking at this conceptual thing."...[During koan study] I'd have to go to my teacher and I'd have to present my understanding, but present it like a non-conceptual way, knowing that the koan is in my body, or it's in my bones. It's kind of a saying in Zen, like, "Know the koan so well that it's in your bones." And he would often say like, "You're still interpreting." You know? He's like, "If you're watching your mind really closely, like it will just keep on..." You know, just the slightest little interpretation and you're like all the way off. You miss it. And he was like, "Concentrate! You need to concentrate more." And I was like, "Well, I don't know? Like what is concentration then? Maybe I don't know." And he was like, "Just be there. Just be there in the moment, fully, with no hang-ups."

[Later in the interview] I was experiencing it in my mind a lot, especially on reflection, but, you know, giving someone spiritual care, it was a vivid experience. It was a vivid, visual experience, especially someone who is

³⁶⁵ See "*auddhatya*" in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 79.

³⁶⁶ For more, see "*genjō kōan*" in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 317-318.

³⁶⁷ Interview 009, June 28, 2017.

like actively dying. You know, I'd be like, "Okay, well, they're like at the old age and death part of birth, old age, sickness, and death." But see, that was just something that went across my mind and that's really not getting at it, you know? That was just like a...I would say like there is interpretation. That's uh, I don't want to say that's discursive, but...

Researcher: But it's an interpretation.

Participant: Yeah, it's an interpretation, where birth, old age, sickness, and death, um...when I look, I could experience birth, old age, sickness, and death in a single moment in my mind...That's still interpretation, whereas like, you know, feel it. Feel birth, old age, sickness, and death. Do you feel it in your bones? Do you feel it in your bones?³⁶⁸

When I inquired about this viewpoint among other participants, some affirmed that it could align with certain Zen tenants and practices,³⁶⁹ but others questioned the extreme nature of the viewpoint. One responded:

Well, I mean, I would say kind of Middle Way, too. That seems a little bit of one extreme, of saying, "No, not concepts. We're not gonna talk about concepts." Like, well, but actually in practice, the *shikantaza* [Zen meditation], you know mindfulness or other practices it's, you actually do label in a way. I mean, at some level you're noticing what is arising. You don't have to cling to it and keep it small, but you can notice what's there. I think it's pretty important because if we're not reflecting on what's happening, we're not able to, then we're kind of, we're maybe perpetuating some unconscious stuff that maybe is not so helpful. So, I would worry about that on the other end. Right? I respect that view of not knowing, and we can never really know. I mean, what can we ever know? How can we ever know the true Dharma?³⁷⁰

The last statement refers to the nature of ultimate truth as beyond language and concepts. As with all things Buddhist, the Middle Way between extremes seems preferable. Overall, while participants found reflection to be a helpful and important aspect of their spiritual lives and

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* notes that, since the early twentieth century, "The term Zen has also come to connote a 'pure experience' (*junsui keiken*) that transcends language and thought," and stresses meditation and—primarily among the Rinzai lineage—koan practice. For more, see "Zen" in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 1050.

³⁷⁰ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

practice of spiritual care, some were averse to the overemphasis on meaning-making (as one aspect of reflection) they perceived to be a result of the Christian origins of ‘theological’ reflection methods.³⁷¹

One chaplain pointed out that reflection is not universally positive:

Yeah, and you know, obviously sometimes I think it's very valuable to reflect on what I've done. Like, purely from a professional standpoint. Like, okay, I was really in a very intense emotional situation, so it can help to critically reflect on what I did and think about like, was I, you know, cognizant at the time?...But I guess my main point is like, I don't think reflection on chaplaincy from a spiritual perspective has a direct relationship to the quality of the care afterward. Like, or, it doesn't have a predictable relationship. It's not always positive. It's not always negative.³⁷²

This chaplain provided an example of working with a patient whom the rest of the care team had trouble communicating with, but with whom the chaplain had formed a strong connection:

I don't think that [reflection] was helpful. I don't think the reason we connected in the first place, and I don't think the spiritual care that I was providing that was valuable, was aided by that reflection. I think I became

³⁷¹ I speculate this may be related to a faith-based commitment to the world as created by an omniscient, omnipotent God whom, one presumes, meant to create the world in a particular way. Thus, God means all things in the world for some purpose. Therefore, from a monotheist perspective, learning one's purpose or the meaning of an event would help one better understand or draw closer to God. Whereas in Buddhist cosmology, the world has always existed (its origin is one of the questions not to be speculated upon lest it drive one mad), and phenomena rise and fall through cyclical patterns of becoming and dissolution, humans included. Meaning is not imparted by any outside force, only momentarily constructed by finite beings. As such, any meaning we may assign to an event may be useful, but ultimately empty, just as all language and concepts are ultimately empty of inherent nature. In the Christian paradigm, meaning is ontological and serves a soteriological function. In the Buddhist paradigm, meaning is purely heuristic and may or may not serve any soteriological function. While meaning may be *upaya* (skillful means) in the present, it must ultimately be abandoned to achieve awakening, the final goal of practice. Therefore, Christians and Buddhists may frustrate one another over these topics. Christians seem quick to “fabricate” meaning that may or may not be there, and Buddhists seem reluctant to ponder the meaning of particular events. These are only my own musings and not the point of the present section.

³⁷² Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

kind of appropriated by the rest of the care team and their agenda, and I kind got caught up in this sense of like some sort of salvific goal of spiritual care, as opposed to just companioning people in their experience, whatever it is. And I think I lost touch of where I usually stay in my practice of chaplaincy where I'm just present and hold a certain motivation. So, in that way, I think the reflection, it added too much fabrication.³⁷³

This is another example of how the concepts clustered around reflecting connect to the concepts clustered around spiritual care, particularly ideas about connecting and being present for careseekers. Reflection can both aid that process and hinder it. This is aligned with the Buddhist concepts of Right Intention and Right View. It is not helpful to reflect with wrong intention (i.e., malice) on wrong views. It is helpful to reflect with Right Intention (i.e., goodwill) on Right Views, which is primarily about understanding the nature, causes, and cessation of suffering, or the Four Noble Truths. Many participants noted that over time, their ability to reflect in helpful ways did improve.

As the interviews progressed, I developed better methods for eliciting information from participants about the processes by which they learned to practice reflection in relation to their spiritual lives and spiritual care as chaplains. A narrative of change and growth in their reflection methods began to emerge as well. As my questions became more focused, I inquired specifically about what participants might expect from someone who had done a lot of reflection compared to someone who was just beginning to reflect on spiritual or religious themes, and I developed memos recording this information.

³⁷³ Ibid.

During the initial interviews, participants characterized their earlier attempts at reflection as naïve and uncritical;³⁷⁴ easy or lazy;³⁷⁵ fearful, skeptical, and unnecessarily critical;³⁷⁶ feeling insufficient;³⁷⁷ and full of struggling, confusion, and self-doubt.³⁷⁸ In contrast, they characterized their reflections now as more sophisticated and nuanced;³⁷⁹ more refined;³⁸⁰ softer, more open, confident, less judgmental, and more comfortable with not-knowing;³⁸¹ more intentional and structured;³⁸² feeling more authentic as a Buddhist;³⁸³ developing a natural habit of pausing, thinking, and reflecting that is intentional;³⁸⁴ being emotionally open with others, clear, and articulate;³⁸⁵ more attuned, open, skilled, and effective;³⁸⁶ based in habitual writing and sharing;³⁸⁷ and wise and well-directed.³⁸⁸

One participant characterized the process as one in which, at an early stage, they were still very much discovering new insights, while now they were working to digest those insights and live them fully.³⁸⁹ For many, the process of living one's insights led to more confidence and clarity over time as the Dharma was affirmed through their direct experience, which is precisely

³⁷⁴ Interview 005, July 15, 2017.

³⁷⁵ Interview 007, June 29, 2017.

³⁷⁶ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

³⁷⁷ Interview 003, June 2, 2017.

³⁷⁸ Interview 009, June 28, 2017.

³⁷⁹ Interview 005, July 15, 2017.

³⁸⁰ Interview 007, June 29, 2017.

³⁸¹ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

³⁸² Interview 002, June 22, 2017.

³⁸³ Interview 003, June 2, 2017.

³⁸⁴ Interview 009, June 28, 2017.

³⁸⁵ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

³⁸⁶ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

³⁸⁷ Interview 001, July 27, 2017.

³⁸⁸ Interview 014, August 15, 2017.

³⁸⁹ Interview 001, July 27, 2017.

what the Dharma calls on practitioners to do. This topic was touched on again in the follow-up interviews as part of the questions related to hypothesis one. It will be explored further below.

The topic of maturity in reflection is related to the code, “seeking,” in that many participants described starting from a place of confusion and seeking answers to help them with their lives. Mature reflection was characterized by a change in what one seeks, becoming less about seeking answers and more about seeking to live with virtue and integrity—to put the answers one had found into practice. This affirms the order of the Three *Prajñās*, which move from developing wisdom from listening, then contemplating, then practicing.

“Seeking” emerged as a prominent code, accounting for sixty-four quotes within the thirteen initial interviews. “Seeking” includes statements related to drawing out; discovering; asking; looking; seeing needs; questioning; exploring; accessing; getting information; searching; and extracting information, knowledge, wisdom, or insight. (It also related to “seeking” to perceive, feel, be, become, or behave in particular ways, which was later categorized under codes for intention and motivation.)

As coding continued, this code took on a life of its own, accounting for moments of curiosity that were both mundane and spiritual. Reviewing the quotations revealed a wide variety of types of seeking that could be categorized by two factors: who is doing the seeking and who has initiated the seeking. First, codes were split based on who was seeking, either the careseeker or the chaplain. Then codes were analyzed based on the context in which the seeking took place; in particular, if the seeker had been invited to seek by another. The following matrix emerged in the process of memoing:

		Context	
		Self-Initiated	Other-Initiated
Seeker	Careseeker	Careseeker is seeking, asking questions, etc.; chaplain accompanies and facilitates	Chaplain invites the careseeker to seek by asking questions and drawing them out, then accompanies and facilitates
	Chaplain	Chaplain is seeking for self, for own spiritual formation and growth	Teacher, supervisor, or peers invite chaplain to seek, asks questions, etc.

In addition to this matrix, chaplains engaged in seeking that was structurally initiated. Structures that prompted seeking could be self-imposed, such as part of one's private meditation practice or journaling and writing habits, or provided by others, such through course assignments, CPE verbatims, or hospital charting. As a result, "seeking" was split into six new codes, including "CS [careseeker] is seeking," "chaplain inviting seeking," "chaplain seeking for self," "chaplain questioning own care," "chaplain meta-seeking" (i.e., chaplain is pondering the entire process of searching for answers; of experiencing curiosity, wonder, and awe; of the spiritual journey, etc.), and "inviting chaplain to seek."

Examining and splitting prominent codes in this manner initiated new stages of analysis and theory development. Eventually, these codes were absorbed into the final code set and reformulated to be more specific. In relation to the careseeker, they include "CS curiosity," "CS questioning," "CS struggles with theodicy," "CS's motivation," "CS's sense of purpose," "CS's spiritual hope," "CS finds new meaning," and "CS seeks forgiveness." In relation to the chaplain, they include "chaplain inquires" (descriptive questions), "chaplain invites" (invites the careseeker to reflect, seek, or contemplate), "chaplain questioning" (involves judgment or discernment), "chaplain's spiritual practice," and "chaplain's spiritual goal." The concept of the chaplain being invited to seek by another, such as a teacher, supervisor, or peer, was captured in two codes based on context: "chaplain is reflexive" and "chaplain shares reflection." The

proliferation of codes under what was originally a single concept, “seeking,” helped me better understand the concept and also connect it to other ideas within the data. Critically, the codes for chaplains’ actions above could then be linked to the Three *Prajñās*, as per the chart under question one in the sections above.

Moreover, many aspects of the “seeking” code were better explained through the relationship between reflection and meditation and the overlap of skills for attention and mindfulness. In many instances, the chaplain “paying attention” or “being open” was classified as “seeking.” However, seeking implies an object, a thing to be sought. In some cases, chaplains did have a specific object, outcome, or piece of information they sought. In other cases, however, they maintained basic awareness without agenda. This was, perhaps, miscoded as “seeking” early in the process, but could be understood as a more nondual (no subject or object) state of not-knowing. This led to a later code, “chaplain not-knowing,” which was an important mental method for remaining present for and connecting with careseekers (discussed below) and the sacred (discussed in chapter five).

Correlations between Christian literature on theological reflection and the ways in which the chaplains in this study discussed reflection will be discussed in more detail in chapter six. However, we can, in brief, draw parallels and distinctions between what these participants described and the basic description of ‘theological’ reflection in Graham, Walton, and Ward’s book. For one thing, the chaplains in this study described reflection as a process, rather than a product, even when it resulted in written work. For many, the written reflections were only one stage in a longer process of reflection. This aligns with Graham, Walton, and Ward’s description of theological reflection as “An activity that enables people of faith to give an account of the values and traditions that underpin their choices and convictions and deepens their

understanding.”³⁹⁰ Likewise, the chaplains in this study affirmed that reflection enabled them to clarify and articulate why they acted in certain ways and how they understand the world.

Graham, Walton, and Ward further posit that reflection enables connection. In their case, as Christian theologians, this connection is between the person and “divine horizons,”³⁹¹ whereas the chaplains in this study were more likely to make connections between cause and effect, between their situation and the Dharma as an interpretive lens, and even between people. Both groups, the participants and academics, would agree, “At the heart of theological reflection, therefore, are questions about the relationship of theory to practice,” though the academics’ theorizing is somewhat more advanced than the chaplains were able to articulate through the limited medium of interviews and short written reflections submitted for this research.

One memo tracked a list of questions chaplains ask themselves, many of which are about the theory-practice relationship, including simple questions, such as, “What did I say to a patient and why did I say it? And what’s my sense of their spirituality and spiritual state? And why is that my sense?”³⁹² Some chaplains asked more nuanced questions:

You wanna understand suffering? You wanna understand suffering of marriage, of kids, of pain from both physical, psychological, emotional pain? Look at your life. Look at other people, and, oh, look at the way you prac- of not living up, not abiding to the five precepts, and what that leads you to. And does it bring you more happiness or does it bring you more suffering? And if it brings you more suffering, what do you intend to do about it? What are some of the teachings out there that tells us this, and what are some of the practices out there that allow us to grapple with some of these issues?³⁹³

³⁹⁰ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 5-6.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁹² Interview 001, July 27, 2017.

³⁹³ Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

This chaplain is asking directly for a theory to understand suffering and practices to deal with suffering, two of the most common topics in Buddhist literature.

Another chaplain humorously (but seriously) asked about the practice of meditation, “What's the value of sitting on your butt anyway?”³⁹⁴ Questioning plays a major role in both Christian theological reflection and reflection by Buddhist chaplains.

Whereas Graham, Walton, and Ward “connect theological discourse to discourse about the nature of God,” the chaplains in this study connect their reflections to many other things, including the Dharma. However, it is not sufficient to simply replace Christian teachings with Buddhist teachings in the process of reflection. While both types of reflection are, as these authors state, “A critical, interrogative enquiry into the process of relating the resources of faith [or religious teaching, or wisdom derived from direct experience] to the issues of life,”³⁹⁵ this is only Graham, Walton, and Ward’s most general description of theological reflection. The remainder of their book surveys seven primary methods of theological reflection employed by Christians. These methods shall be compared to the processes revealed by this study in more detail in chapter five. For now, I believe it is sufficient to assert that the methods of reflection the Buddhist chaplains employed in this study are on a par with the kind of theological reflection described by Graham, Walton, and Ward. However, I believe the role of reflection itself occupies a significantly different context within the *Buddhadharma*, which will be explored more in the next chapter in relation to the Three *Prajñās*, or wisdom derived from listening, contemplating, and meditating.

³⁹⁴ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

³⁹⁵ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 6.

Concepts Related to Spiritual Care

The chaplains in this study universally reported “being present” as an important aspect—if not the most important aspect—of spiritual care, and many explicitly referred to “connecting” with careseekers. Some chaplains used the professional term, “ministry of presence,” but most did not. Their ability to be present was a frequent topic of reflection and also an aide to reflection, in that “being present” entailed being aware of what was going on for later reflection. One chaplain said, “I mean, certainly I reflect a lot on my own presence. Like how much am I paying attention? How much anxiety am I bringing to the room, or distraction, or whatever? I really try kind of before I go into the room to kind of center myself and take some breaths.”³⁹⁶

Being present can be understood in three respects: the intention behind it, what one actually does to be present, and the outcomes of being present with and for careseekers (and oneself). Participants described the intention as one of goodwill; love or loving-kindness; compassion; equanimity; respect; being openhearted, not preoccupied with doing or saying the “right thing,” comfortable with silence, nonjudgmental, and non-anxious; and having unconditional positive regard, a professional term popularized in spiritual care by pastoral-care scholar Howard Clinebell (and based on the work of psychologist Carl Rogers).³⁹⁷ One chaplain also described the quality of being somewhat detached, or being compassionate and “fully there, but I don’t bring it home with me.”³⁹⁸ Other chaplains called this having no agenda, not trying to fix things, and having good boundaries.

³⁹⁶ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

³⁹⁷ Clinebell and McKeever, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 466.

³⁹⁸ Interview 004, June 1, 2017.

When they are being present with careseekers, words rarely described what they were actually doing. Many participants said they were “just being present,”³⁹⁹ “just be[ing] there,”⁴⁰⁰ or “showing up,”⁴⁰¹ but when those statements are further questioned, chaplains tended to describe practices of attention, focus, flexibility, active listening, eye contact, body language, skillful response, gentle questioning, praying, and noticing and remembering details, even small ones, about the careseeker.

When chaplains can do this successfully, the fruition (to use a Buddhist term) can be positive in almost counterintuitive ways. It doesn’t seem like they’re doing much of anything, yet careseekers express profound gratitude and undergo amazing transformations. Careseekers reported feeling more peaceful, respected, better connected to their emotions, and better able to make sense of things. They appreciated “someone being there”⁴⁰² and experienced moments of levity or joy in otherwise difficult situations.

Chaplains also talked about the negative consequences of not being present, of not being mindful, or of being self-conscious and anxious. Sometimes, not even the best ministry of presence could help a careseeker, but by continuing to be present such in situations, chaplains seemed better able to cope with the suffering they themselves experienced. (As a side-note, the analytical paradigm revealed through the investigation of being present and connecting, intention-task-fruition, became an important way of organizing theoretical categories within the Framework described in chapter five.)

³⁹⁹ Interview 002, June 22, 2017.

⁴⁰⁰ Interview 004, June 1, 2017.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

Being present helped chaplains connect with careseekers, while, “If I’m not totally present, I’m gonna lose that connection.”⁴⁰³ As with the code for “seeking,” the code for “connecting” quickly grew as data analysis continued, and it soon began to represent several different things. In relation to being present, “connecting” refers to the connection between two people, specifically the chaplain and careseeker(s). Building connection could be as simple as being present and having a conversation that both parties are interested in having.⁴⁰⁴ One chaplain described how connecting with careseekers “felt like magic and I didn’t have [to] work so hard [scoffs], which is odd.”⁴⁰⁵

Many chaplains associated a sense of joy with connection, even in traumatic circumstances, and even on days when they would drive home crying. Sometimes connecting involved a sense of identification with or transference (or counter-transference) based on the careseeker’s situation. When chaplains could remain present and be mindful of these psychological processes, they did not appear to interfere with care. However, when chaplains were not aware of them and became overwhelmed, they reported needing to step back, calm down, and/or seek support before being able to continue offering spiritual care.

However, the chaplains also understood that connection could have a more spiritual dimension as people sought to connect with themselves or things greater than themselves, such as God, the divine, or the big existential questions of the universe. The big questions that all people ask “break down all labels and barriers.”⁴⁰⁶ Chaplains could empathize with careseekers’ desire to or sense of connection with God based on the chaplain’s own sense of connection with

⁴⁰³ Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

⁴⁰⁴ Interview 009, June 28, 2017.

⁴⁰⁵ Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

something larger than themselves, even though they did not call that thing “God.” In these instances, being open to a sense of mystery or not-knowing helped chaplains empathize with careseekers who felt connected to things the chaplains did not personally feel connected to, but could imagine based on their own sense of connection to something else or their own mystical experiences. One chaplain likened connection to “the yoga idea of union versus separation or isolation”; the latter, to them, was a form of suffering.⁴⁰⁷

Other chaplains interpreted connection as a byproduct of interdependence or emptiness. We are able to connect with others because we are, in fact, not separate from them. Any sense of separation is actually a delusion that perpetuates suffering. In this respect, connection had a soteriological function for several of the chaplains I spoke with. One described it as being “beyond words,”⁴⁰⁸ a phrase often used to describe wisdom, or *prajñā*. Connection takes on an aspect of wisdom when viewed as a function of interdependence or emptiness. One chaplain talked about connecting with careseekers on the basis of a shared buddha-nature, of not being fundamentally different from others, and therefore being interdependent.⁴⁰⁹ This shall be discussed further in relation to stages three and four of the Framework in the next chapter.

This concept was common, though not ubiquitous, in the data. Ten of the thirteen chaplains spoke about connecting with careseekers; two more spoke about connecting with teachers and “the sacred,” but not careseekers; and the remaining one did not explicitly reference connection, but did talk about being present. It is probable that connecting is a learned skill, although this hypothesis was specifically investigated in the data, as explored in the following

⁴⁰⁷ Interview 002, June 22, 2017.

⁴⁰⁸ Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

⁴⁰⁹ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

section. It follows logically from questions about the importance of sharing reflection in the process of learning to reflect.

Some chaplains talked about having strong connections with people in their past, particularly teachers and spiritual friends, and attributed some of their ability to connect to careseekers to this prior experience.⁴¹⁰ In most other cases, a sense of connection could be inferred from how participants spoke about the process of sharing and getting feedback on their reflections. Sharing did not always lead to connection, but it certainly could and often did.

Both being present and connecting rely on particular traits referenced by the participants in this study. These traits include character virtues, as well as aspects of personality or temperament, emotional self-management, and authenticity. Some of these traits, such as love, compassion, and openness, have already been described above in relation to the intentions one holds when being present with careseekers. These can be categorized as virtues. Other traits relate to personality and temperament. Some chaplains spoke about being naturally introverted

⁴¹⁰ I conducted a series of interviews in 2013 that also appeared to indicate this was the case. In these interviews, Buddhist chaplaincy students correlated prior experiences of connection with a conviction that all care had a fundamentally spiritual aspect. In contrast, Buddhist chaplaincy students who had not experienced those connections in the past for themselves tended to see most types of care as mundane (nonspiritually motivated) and spiritual care as a specialized type of care. The students in the first group had at some point in their lives received “spiritual care” (self-described) from someone other than a designated spiritual caregiver, such as a nurse, parent, or friend, rather than a chaplain or religious person. They reported a strong sense of connection with this person that helped fulfill a spiritual need. Conversely, chaplains in the second group were not able to report ever receiving “spiritual care” from another, including chaplains or religious teachers. They did not report ever connecting with others in ways that fulfilled their spiritual needs. See Sanford, “Is All Care Spiritual? Viewpoints of Buddhist Chaplains and Chaplaincy Students,” unpublished presentation, December 4, 2013., https://www.academia.edu/7204811/Is_All_Care_Spiritual_Viewpoints_of_Buddhist_Chaplains_and_Chaplaincy_Students.

and reflective,⁴¹¹ “not very emotional,”⁴¹² or sensitive,⁴¹³ but no patterns pervaded the participant pool in this respect.

On the other hand, most chaplains spoke about the necessity of emotional self-regulation. They felt it was important to remain calm and equanimous with careseekers, especially when careseekers themselves were experiencing turbulent emotions. They could empathize with those emotions, even cry and emote, but not to the degree where it might distract the careseeker or cause additional distress. One chaplain explained, “[My practice] helped me to stay calm, because you hear pretty incredible stories from people, and I can't be reacting to, you know, everything. I think I should be the calm existence in...people's chaotic situations.”⁴¹⁴ Emotional self-management was important both during encounters and afterward to ensure effective self-care and long-term sustainability. One participant specifically researched “compassion satisfaction,” which is “the inherent pleasure that is experience in being compassion [sic]. So it's a *vedana*, it's a *vedana*⁴¹⁵ of feeling, and for me it's been really valuable to notice it and to cultivate it...[as one of the] mitigating factors for compassion fatigue and burnout.”⁴¹⁶ Participants relied on their Buddhist practice, particularly meditation, for emotional self-regulation, as well as other coping methods, including setting healthy boundaries, self-care routines, appropriate consultation, and therapy, as needed.

⁴¹¹ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

⁴¹² Interview 004, June 1, 2017.

⁴¹³ Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

⁴¹⁴ Interview 004, June 1, 2017.

⁴¹⁵ A sensation that accompanies consciousness and one of the five aggregates that make up what we misperceive as “self.” See “*vedanā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 964.

⁴¹⁶ Interview 005, July 15, 2017.

The final trait that several chaplains repeatedly cited is authenticity. Several chaplains reported anxiety over navigating the new role of Buddhist chaplaincy within a predominantly Christian country and profession. Not only did they deal with all of the same fears of inadequacy, “feeling fake,” or “doing it wrong” that I have observed in all chaplains, but they were also uncertain whether their religious background would be a help or hindrance, welcome or unwelcome by careseekers and cohorts. However, as chaplains progressed in their spiritual care practice, they reported overcoming these insecurities and developing a sense of confidence and sufficiency rooted in authenticity. The more they grew into their identities as Buddhist chaplains, the better they felt about their spiritual care practice and the better the outcomes they reported. Some chaplains reported that supervisors and peers helped in this process. For example:

I made a verbatim presentation on that encounter. The responses from my peer and the supervisor were very supportive. Yeah, and encouraging, because at that time it happened, like almost three years ago, I think. At that time, I was still struggling how to be, say, authentic. Be myself and be a Buddhist at the same time being a chaplain. So, I think, I believe the responses were kind of encouraging me.⁴¹⁷

This was not universally the case, though it did represent the majority of chaplains’ experiences with support from their CPE cohorts leading to greater authenticity. Even those who struggled with their CPE experience developed a sense of authenticity over time based on responses from careseekers. One such chaplain talked about leaving graduate school with a sense of confidence that was then slowly eroded in CPE, where they had to instead “develop [an] essentially Christian theology for chaplaincy, in order to just function in that environment,” only to rediscover their confidence after working for several months beyond CPE residency. They said:

Researcher: What do you think does have a relationship to the quality of the care afterward?

⁴¹⁷ Interview 003, June 2, 2017.

Participant: Being a Buddhist in the encounter. [laughs] Like, practicing in the encounter. Yeah, I think I've had many instances, especially earlier on, where I felt like really armed with some sort of very sound analysis and plan of care, and confidence maybe, and realized like, "None of this is relevant now. They're in a totally, this person's in a totally different place, and I need to adapt to that, and be willing to let go of all of that." And that, I think, is just practice coming in.⁴¹⁸

This chaplain rediscovered a sense of authenticity as a Buddhist as a result of the positive response they received from careseekers. Overall, the code “authenticity” came up twenty-two times in the initial thirteen interviews, making it among the most common values codes.

In addition to character traits and intentions necessary for spiritual care, chaplains identified numerous behaviors they engaged in during spiritual care. These behaviors were categorized in the data first in relation to process codes, which take the form of gerund verbs (-ing), and later in the code category for chaplain actions. The most prominent process codes are listed in chapter three, and they have largely been discussed above; they include meditating, reflecting, practicing, watching the mind, seeking, sharing, being present, connecting, experiencing, supporting, talking, interpreting, learning, suffering (verb), struggling, and writing.

The process codes were useful to draw out common ideas within the data, but they did not specify the action’s context. For example, was the participant “struggling” with their graduate-level courses or “struggling” to understand a careseeker? Therefore, these codes were refined and recategorized into the chaplain actions code group, which specifies both the action and whether it is being undertaken by a chaplain (or chaplain intern) in the context of spiritual care, as part of the chaplain’s learning process related to spiritual care, or as part of the chaplain’s self-care practice. In other words, it is an action undertaken *as a chaplain*, rather than as a student, spouse, private individual, or another role. Naturally, there is some grey area in this

⁴¹⁸ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

categorization, because once a chaplain begins to provide spiritual care, they are never entirely “off the clock,” even in their private lives. I have relied on the participants’ own perceptions of their role in relation to their statements whenever possible. Chaplain actions are categorized according to the Three *Prajñās* above (under question one). The most common codes in this group are: “assessment,” “contemplates,” “spiritual practice,” “interprets tradition,” “supports,” “raises ethical concerns,” “being present,” “consults,” “observes,” “is reflexive,” and “meditates.” These were the most common behaviors chaplains described doing while providing spiritual care.⁴¹⁹

“Assessment” emerged as a surprisingly common code in this group. The term “assessment” is not meant formally, as in conducting a written spiritual assessment of a careseeker, although participants also reported doing so. Rather, “assessment” here captures instances in which chaplains made a judgment or employed discernment, to use a more Buddhist term. This is reflected in statements such as “My sense is that...,”⁴²⁰ “The key issue is...,”⁴²¹ or “It is best to...”⁴²² Here we see chaplains making value judgments, not in the sense of judging the careseeker’s intrinsic or moral worth (although this does happen), but in the sense of employing their expertise to determine a course of action or suggest a conclusion. The frequency with which chaplains engaged in this behavior may surprise them, given the emphasis they also

⁴¹⁹ This does not mean these were the most common behaviors *performed* while providing spiritual care. Repeated psychological studies have demonstrated the unreliability of self-reports for documenting actual behavior. Rather, self-reports tend to document behavior that is meaningful to the actor, which is therefore memorable. In this study, meaningfulness is prioritized above frequency. Therefore, self-reports are better suited to capture this data. Observation would be the best way to capture a more realistic picture of chaplain behaviors overall, but this was not an aspect of this study.

⁴²⁰ Reflection 001, August 12, 2017.

⁴²¹ Reflection 002, July 6, 2017.

⁴²² Reflection 009, September 3, 2017.

placed on being nonjudgmental, open, and maintaining a mindset of not-knowing. I was not able to test this and see if a chaplain's perceptions of how often they employ judgment are aligned with how often they believe they are making judgments. This may be a fruitful area for future research.

“Contemplation” was another key behavior that was cataloged in the final phase of coding. This behavior is reflected in statements such as, “After this visit, I continued to contemplate...,”⁴²³ “...really distill what I think...,”⁴²⁴ or “Contemplating the Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind...”⁴²⁵ From these codes, we find that this behavior includes components of cognitive reflection and meditative practice that is more analytical in nature.⁴²⁶ Chaplains engaged in this kind of contemplation after encounters with careseekers, but in reference to those encounters. Thus, this behavior has the hallmarks of reflection described above, particularly recollection and spiritual formation. Meaning-making was sometimes an outcome of contemplation, but not always. And contemplation is almost always carried out through cognitive, affective, and/or meditational tasks; in other words, thinking, getting in touch with one's emotions, or meditating, which can also include thinking and emotional awareness through formal exercises. One may write about one's contemplations or share them with others later, but that would not itself be considered contemplation.⁴²⁷ I believe the category of contemplation is

⁴²³ Reflection 003, June 22, 2017.

⁴²⁴ Interview 001, July 27, 2017.

⁴²⁵ Reflection 010, July 31, 2017.

⁴²⁶ Meditative practice that is designed to develop calm, concentration, and mindfulness was coded as “chaplain meditates.”

⁴²⁷ Although there are methods for contemplative dialogue, nothing in the participants' statements led me to believe they employed these methods in relation to spiritual care.

larger than and actually includes the category of reflection, as well as other categories, such as meditative exercises.

The chaplain's own spiritual practice was also important to their ongoing work as a spiritual caregiver. Chaplains described their spiritual practice as "Really living it [the Dharma] more fully or coming back into balance..."⁴²⁸ "Allow[ing] me to cultivate..."⁴²⁹ or "It is best to practice Dharma prior to such transitions as a way to..."⁴³⁰ Practices were listed specifically, such as particular types of meditation, *koan* practice, retreat practice, yoga and tai chi, and the practice of virtues. The term "practice" was also used more generally with the connotation of living one's life in accordance with the Dharma, especially the Noble Eightfold Path, the Five Precepts, Refuge Vows, Bodhisattva Vows, and, for the monastic participants, the Vinaya, or rules of conduct for monks and nuns. The dual connotation of the term "practice," both specific and general, can lead to a broad category of behaviors designated as "practice."

In coding the data, I tended to code specific practices, such as meditation, with a separate code, and general statements about practice, such as those above, as "chaplain's spiritual practice" in order to capture what their practice *means* to the chaplains in this study. In the latter respect, chaplains often had both utilitarian and soteriological understandings of their practice. For example, one chaplain wrote in their reflection:

As a chaplain, I find that my practice of zazen meditation and moment to moment mindfulness are ways that I enact the Dharma. These practices allow me to cultivate equanimity (*upekkha*), compassion (*karuna*), loving-kindness (*metta*), generosity (*dana*) and the other *pāramitās*. My aim is to, like Avalokiteshvara, hear the cries of the world, and thus relieve the suffering of the people I encounter. I see this as a way to live out my Bodhisattva Vows to work for the liberation of all beings.⁴³¹

⁴²⁸ Interview 001, July 27, 2017.

⁴²⁹ Reflection 008, July 24, 2017.

⁴³⁰ Reflection 009, September 3, 2017.

⁴³¹ Reflection 008, July 24, 2017.

In this sense, practice is both utilitarian—a means of cultivating virtues that assist in their work as a chaplain—and soteriological—a means of liberation for all beings. This view of practice is aligned with the Dharma, particularly with the parable of the raft. This simile compares the Dharma to a raft constructed for crossing turbulent waters. After crossing, the Buddha asks:

[Buddha:] “Having crossed over to the further shore, he might think, ‘How useful this raft has been to me! For it was in dependence on this raft that, making an effort with my hands & feet, I have crossed over to safety on the further shore. Why don't I, having hoisted it on my head or carrying it on my back, go wherever I like?’ What do you think, monks: Would the man, in doing that, be doing what should be done with the raft?”

[Monks:] “No, lord.”

[Buddha:] “...In the same way, monks, I have taught the Dhamma compared to a raft, for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of holding onto. Understanding the Dhamma as taught compared to a raft, you should let go even of Dhammas, to say nothing of non-Dhammas.”⁴³²

Likewise, one's practice is utilitarian and soteriological; it is for the purpose of crossing over into liberation. Some practices are provisional, to be abandoned when one achieves certain attainments, or to be progressively replaced with other practices. Some practices are ongoing. Even the Buddha continued to meditate after his enlightenment, one presumes to maintain the health of mind and body until they were transcended at the body's death forty years later.

My exploration of these themes and concepts developed many small theories, spectrums, questions, and hypotheses. Memos tracked these theories, spectrums, and questions and helped me develop five main hypotheses. These hypotheses largely represent trends in the data that I wished to confirm via follow-up interviews, as well as some unanswered questions to explore. They allowed me to investigate theoretical categories and code clusters in greater detail. The five

⁴³² “Alagaddupama Sutta: The Water-Snake Simile” (MN 22), trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, last modified December 17, 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.022.than.html>.

hypotheses are described below, along with the means by which they were explored in follow-up interviews and the outcomes of those interviews.

Hypotheses

The following five hypotheses were developed based on data from the initial interviews and reflections. They were tested via follow-up interviews with five participants. In the first three follow-up interviews, I read the hypotheses to the participants, asked them for their thoughts, and then asked them a series of follow-up questions. Some participants responded to this format better than others. Due to the scheduling needs of the participants, all three interviews were conducted on the same day. This was far from ideal, but I was able to memo for thirty-to-sixty minutes between each interview. Unexpectedly, collecting so much data in such a short time generated an intuitive leap that resulted in the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care, which I will detail in the following chapter. The final two interviews were conducted the following week. Using insights from the earlier three follow-ups, I altered the interview format for these last two, posing questions related to each hypothesis first, then going through all five hypotheses in turn after participants had been primed by reflecting on the questions. This appeared to lead to more thoughtful responses to the hypotheses themselves. I also presented an early draft of the Framework to the final two participants for their feedback, which is detailed in chapter five. Follow-up interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed in the final round of theoretical coding as part of the complete data pool. This section summarizes responses to each of the five hypotheses and references how these responses helped develop the Framework.

Hypothesis One: Experience Predicates Ability

Hypothesis One: Chaplains who have themselves done their fair share of spiritual seeking and experienced a sufficient amount of other-initiated reflection (i.e., been prompted to seek by teachers and supervisors) seem to be better able to facilitate reflection/seeking in careseekers through appropriate questioning, accompanying, drawing out, reframing, and responding (sub-codes).

This hypothesis developed from the memo related to maturity and questions about the relationship between codes for “reflection” and “seeking.” It included questions like, 1) “For you, what characterizes mature reflection vs. immature or still-developing reflection?” 2) “If you were helping someone else learn how to reflect, what might you expect to see in a novice?” and 3) “How might you help them mature in their practice of reflection?” Chaplains spontaneously shared or were prompted to provide real examples from spiritual care as well as their own experiences and theories.

Four participants responded to this hypothesis affirmatively and one response was noncommittal (which became typical of this participant throughout the follow-up interview and may be the result of an indirect communication style). Participants further defined what constitutes “mature” and “still-developing” reflection, described how they support others in maturation, and detailed how they were supported when sharing their own reflections with others. Sharing their reflections with others and receiving guidance and feedback was critical to their maturation process, as was effective modeling from more mature spiritual friends. One participant who, in my opinion, seemed highly capable of providing articulate and reflective responses in interviews, described having numerous “spiritual directors” of various faith traditions and groups who helped them “open up for the first time” and learn “how to talk into a

group and be held by a group.”⁴³³ Through this, they developed a more “mature” ability to reflect on their own.

Mature reflection is characterized by emotional awareness; “less enmeshment” with one’s emotional reactions to events; an ability to see one’s own mind and thought processes; knowing oneself and being comfortable with oneself; being “more integrated”,⁴³⁴ and by less confusion and more clarity, insight, wisdom. Participants also described developing an ability to continue going deeper and looking beyond the “first push,” as well as an “openness to unpacking multiple interpretations...[including] possible understandings that emerge that are not necessarily what we think of as ourselves.”⁴³⁵ Participants described holding not-knowing in relation to careseekers and to oneself and also to being open to a sense of self that may be radically different, “more mysterious,” broader, and deeper than they first supposed, as a result of ongoing reflection. In a sense, they came to know themselves better and to know better how little they know themselves.⁴³⁶

When asked what they might expect to see in someone whose ability to reflect was undeveloped, chaplains relied on both memory from their own less-reflective pasts and their experiences with careseekers. They would expect more difficult emotions to be repressed or

⁴³³ Follow-up Interview 008, October 5, 2017.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ Follow-up Interview 003, October 5, 2017.

⁴³⁶ Incidentally, psychologists Patricia King and Karen Strohm Kitchener have identified this as a hallmark of moving from pre-reflective thinking into quasi-reflective and then reflective thinking in relation to the way students think about knowledge. In other words, from believing we know what we see or are told, to a belief that knowledge is unreliable and subjective, to an understanding that knowledge is constructed according to various norms. I find this arc nicely parallels the Three *Prajñās* and was affirmed by participants in the study. See Patricia M. King and Karen S. Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment: Understanding and Promoting Intellectual Growth and Critical Thinking in Adolescents and Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994).

ignored and, when faced, for the careseeker to become more easily overwhelmed than exhausted. As a result, careseekers might be less willing and less able to share. When they do share, they may experience confusion and have difficulty articulating just what they are thinking or feeling. They may exhibit more discursiveness and move quickly from topic to topic or from emotion to reaction. Careseekers may also be unable to really look beneath the surface of what's going on and lack an ability to question their own experience or be aware of subtleties or patterns. Chaplains had many ways of responding to these characteristics.

First, a compassionate listening presence that doesn't flinch from the careseeker's raw emotions can be supportive. Second, the chaplains emphasized trust as an important foundation for connection. When careseekers feel safe, they share. Trust is built by going at the careseeker's pace, letting them lead the conversation, using their language, and holding them in unconditional positive regard. Collectively, this set of skills and attitudes can be known as "accompaniment." Accompaniment can be conveyed through words, body language, eye contact, and by including everyone in the room (e.g., patient and family) in the circle of care. Third, chaplains can help the careseeker understand what is happening by listening carefully, reflecting accurately, and reframing appropriately to help bring important nuances and patterns to light. Chaplains also assist in this process by asking questions, keeping an open or not-knowing mind, and demonstrating genuine curiosity. Finally, chaplains modeled the process of reflection through appropriate self-disclosure and by synthesizing reflection on the careseeker's situation from the careseeker's own statements.

Responses to this hypothesis informed both "stage two: student" and "stage four: spiritual friend" in the Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care. Chaplains describing the maturity of their own reflection process in relation to spiritual friends who guided them on their path during

stage two helped inform the spiritual friend role, a role the chaplains themselves assumed in stage four. The supportive activities described by the chaplains, the intentions with which they undertake them, and the outcomes they produce inform stage four, particularly in relation to wisdom developed from listening and contemplating. The topic of maturity helped inform the entire developmental arc of the Framework, from stage one to stage four, especially in relation to the outcomes of wisdom developed through contemplation at each stage.

Hypothesis Two: Human Connection Predicates Facilitation

Hypothesis Two: Chaplains who can form strong connections with careseekers are better able to facilitate ‘theological’ reflection. This hypothesis developed from what chaplains said about the importance of connection as an attempt to explore the relationship between connection (and by, extension, being present) and the main topic of this research, ‘theological’ reflection. As the analysis of significant concepts (above) reveals, participants spoke to different clusters of concepts, one related to reflection—mostly their own reflection—and the other related to spiritual care, but rarely about facilitating reflection for others. It was important to investigate the relationship between these two clusters, and “connection” was the most logical bridging concept. This hypothesis was explored with questions such as, 1) “How would you define a sense of connection with a careseeker?” 2) “What factors contribute to a good or strong connection?” 3) “What factors might make it hard to form a good connection?” and 4) “What do you do or say when you are with a careseeker to initiate or maintain a good connection?”

All participants responded to this hypothesis affirmatively. In fact, most perceived it as a foregone conclusion. Connection is based on rapport, trust, and accompaniment. Not only must chaplains accompany careseekers, but careseekers must also perceive and welcome that accompaniment. When both of those things happen, it is called “connection.” Connection served

as the foundation for facilitating ‘theological’ reflection, even in careseekers who are at first resistant or hesitant.

Chaplains listed many potential barriers for connection, both internal and external. Internal barriers prevent the chaplain from accompanying the careseeker and include self-doubt, anxiety, or mistrust in the process; egoic self-protection or self-centeredness; distraction, discursiveness, and frustration; or having an agenda. One chaplain pointed out, “People can smell an agenda miles away.”⁴³⁷ Whether that agenda is performance-driven, selfish, or even unrelated to the careseeker, they will shut you out for their own self-protection. External barriers include inward-focused family systems and religions and cultures that prefer care from in-group members; the careseeker’s mental state, including when it is caused by medical issues or medications; cultural (including gender norms) and linguistic barriers that make conversation difficult; stigma around the chaplain, especially as it relates to impending death or pushing a religious agenda; and, in hospitals, frequent disruptions from medical staff. Despite the many barriers, connection was deemed worthwhile because of the intrinsically good feelings both chaplain and careseeker experience during connection and due to the outcomes it can lead to in reference to ‘theological’ reflection. One participant reported, “Connection is the key...If the chaplain does not connect to the other person, nothing happens.”⁴³⁸ Several expressed that the nature of connection and its outcomes were not easily put into words, a hallmark of *prajñā*, or the direct experience of wisdom.

⁴³⁷ Follow-up Interview 005, October 11, 2017.

⁴³⁸ Follow-up Interview 003, October 5, 2017.

Responses to this hypothesis helped develop better language for describing the spiritual friend's role in relation to 'theological' reflection, especially the aspect of accompaniment. The spiritual friend is described thus in the Pāli scriptures:

[Buddha said:] "These four, young householder, should be understood as warm-hearted friends: he who is a helpmate, he who is the same in happiness and sorrow, he who gives good counsel, he who sympathises...[sic]

The friend who is a helpmate,
the friend in happiness and woe,
the friend who gives good counsel,
the friend who sympathises too — [sic]
these four as friends the wise behold
and cherish them devotedly
as does a mother her own child."⁴³⁹

The *sutta* continues, as the Buddha advises the young son of a lay disciple, defining the actions of the helpmate, the friend in happiness and woe, the good counselor, and the sympathetic. Each of these behaviors were, at some point described by the participants in this study as "spiritual care," many in direct relation to building a connection with careseekers and facilitating 'theological' reflection. Thus, we see a direct parallel between the activities of the spiritual friend and the chaplain: both support and protect others; empathize with the others in joy and sorrow; gently inquire and guide, especially in ethical decision-making; and only have goodwill for the others. Having good friends is the first step in the path to "awakening"⁴⁴⁰ or developing wisdom through reflection.

⁴³⁹ "Sigalovada Sutta: The Discourse to Sigala" (DN 31), trans. Narada Thera. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, last updated November 30, 2013, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.31.0.nara.html>.

⁴⁴⁰ "Sambodhi Sutta: Self-Awakening" (AN 9.1), trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, last updated November 30, 2013, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/an/an09/an09.001.than.html>.

Hypothesis Three: Facilitation Predicates Sacred Connection

Hypothesis Three: The ability of a chaplain to facilitate ‘theological’ reflection that enables the careseeker to connect with something beyond oneself is predicated on or influenced by that chaplain's experience of a similar connection to 1) something sacred; 2) God or the divine; 3) a sense of oneness, wholeness, or interconnectedness; 4) a sense of meaning or purpose for their own life; or 5) other people to whom they look for guidance during reflection.

This hypothesis developed from some statements by chaplains that showed discomfort with the idea of working with careseekers on spiritual concepts with which the chaplain was not familiar or comfortable. This hypothesis is about the chaplain’s ability to relate to careseekers’ experiences, as was the question my rabbi asked me at the outset of my own CPE (see chapter one). The key term in this question is “similar.” Does spiritual care only benefit one if the chaplain has a similar experience? Moreover, is similarity of experience predicated on the characteristics of connection or on that which one is connected to (or both)?

Five different types of connections that appeared in the data were used in exploring this hypothesis. Participants were asked questions including, 1) “What is the difference between reflecting for oneself or on one's own experience and “facilitating” reflection for another person? How do you help someone else reflect on their experience?” and 2) “When a careseeker brings up a spiritual or religious topic that is not commonly addressed in the Dharma or that they are clearly thinking of in relation to a theist worldview, such as forgiveness or God’s will, how do you understand that topic?” Chaplains often gave specific examples of how they gained insight into such topics; how such conversations went, if any occurred; how they assessed the function of the careseeker’s understanding in the situation; and how they facilitated opportunities for the careseeker to reflect and/or mature, including concrete things the chaplain might say or do in such situations.

Responses to this hypothesis were more mixed, with three affirmative and two noncommittal. The three affirmative responses contained different nuances. Therefore, in this section, it may be easiest to describe each response in turn.

The first participant provided the strongest favorable response, stating, “I think spiritual experience is the same.”⁴⁴¹ This chaplain referenced a sense of connection to deeper levels of self/nonself and emphasized practice as a major component, which was corroborated by other chaplains elsewhere in the data. This participant remarked, “It’s hard to go to the depth of, and really be there in suffering, if you haven’t gone through that for yourself.”⁴⁴²

This was also corroborated by others, who described the necessity of working through one’s own issues, past traumas, grief, biases, and emotional processes to come to a deeper sense of awareness of oneself and one’s relation to all things. They described connecting both inwardly and outwardly at the same time. This follows a classic formula from the Dharma in which the Buddha demonstrates the nature of nonself by looking in detail at the self. One looks inward to begin to understand the nature of all phenomena, including both oneself and others, and develop wisdom. In the more immediate sense, this provides the chaplain with an up-close and personal view of human psychology. “Your ability to kind of go to the difficult places with patients is kind of predicated on some degree on how much you’ve done the work. Which I think relates to your experience of God or oneness or you know, gone through the spiritual journey.”⁴⁴³ This participant described an ability to connect based on experiencing a similar process, rather than a similar outcome.

⁴⁴¹ Follow-up Interview 008, October 5, 2017.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

The second follow-up interview also provided an affirmative response, but with a caveat. This participant echoed the necessity of looking at one's own mind as a common aspect of the spiritual journey. However, they also held out the possibility that the interaction between the caregiver and careseeker could also be a space in which sacred connection could spontaneously occur, without being predicated on any previous connection experienced by either party. In that instance, neither party need have any familiarity with the strong sense of connection that could, nevertheless, develop in and through the caring encounter itself. While this possibility always exists, for this participant, certain skills and attitudes in the chaplain (e.g., curiosity, gentle questioning, etc.) and certain predispositions in the careseeker (i.e., some kind of spiritual view, as opposed to complete nihilism) did make those instances of spontaneous connection more likely.⁴⁴⁴ This is akin to the Buddhist dialogue on sudden versus gradual enlightenment. Some lineages hold that enlightenment is the culmination of lifetimes of effort and cultivation, while others maintain that it just happens in a sudden moment of awareness of the wisdom that was always present. Their practices look remarkably similar, leading one to conclude that the conditions for sudden enlightenment can be cultivated, though the final moment of enlightenment arrives like lightning.

The third participant was more noncommittal on this topic, which was characteristic of this participant's responses to four of the five hypotheses and may be the result of a culturally indirect communication style. While the participant themselves described a strong sense of interconnection with all things, they were hesitant to ascribe any significance to this in relation to their work with careseekers, particularly Christians. As a result, they "hesitate to talk about my faith to a lot of you, those people who are from different faith traditions. But sometimes they

⁴⁴⁴ Follow-up Interview 009, October 12, 2017.

allow me to go talk about my worldview of my faith. Then in that case I talk to them and I wish you feel you are connect or you are supported by others including the God.” They wished for careseekers to experience a similarly enriching sense of connection, but were not prepared to speak on behalf of careseekers to characterize that connection, or to assert that such a similar sense of connection was helpful.

While on the one hand stating, “I try not to kind of guide the person to some direction and I am not skillful in this kind of situation,” that is, facilitating ‘theological’ reflection, they also describe behaviors remarkably similar to other participants who believe they are doing just that, including asking open-ended questions, showing curiosity, allowing the careseeker to lead, not making assumptions, listening, and holding an intention of compassion and goodwill.⁴⁴⁵ This may be due to a misunderstanding regarding the nature of ‘theological’ reflection and the behaviors necessary to facilitate it for others.

The fourth participant affirmed the hypothesis and suggested splitting it into separate concepts. On the one hand, the experience of interconnection:

...falls more in the category of embodied transmission and the ability to model/lead through/accompany falls more in the category of a learned, albeit often only lately learned skillset. And those, to me, rightly or wrongly, I think of in two different camps. I can see strong arguments being made that they are one in the same thing, but I put one in the skillful means basket and the other in the wisdom basket.⁴⁴⁶

Embodied transmission refers to the experience of having received the Dharma (i.e., it being transmitted by a teacher) and then living in accordance with the Dharma (i.e., embodying it). This is analogous to wisdom, as wisdom is embodied by its nature. On the other hand, skillful means, or *upāya*, refers more to a particular strategy or method. Methods can, to an imperfect

⁴⁴⁵ Follow-up Interview 003, October 5, 2017.

⁴⁴⁶ Follow-up Interview 005, October 11, 2017.

extent, be transmitted independent of wisdom. For example, the Five Precepts (i.e., no killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, or intoxicants) can be followed and will result in spiritual progress even before one possesses the embodied wisdom that fully demonstrates why they should be followed and how they lead to spiritual progress. However, as this participant and others affirmed, the ongoing successful use of *upāya* is dependent upon developing wisdom. Chaplains must practice and develop wisdom of their own in order to correctly employ the right methods with careseekers at the right time to help them develop through ‘theological’ reflection.

This participant, like the former chaplain, stated, “I’ve never tried to do that particular role [of facilitating theological reflection],” and then they explained what they *have* done with careseekers, which would qualify as just that, including listening, waiting for an opening, gentle questioning, and then assessing “the impact of how they’re relating to their belief structure and then their hearing and understanding making meaning.”⁴⁴⁷ This again, could be due to lack of familiarity with just what it means to facilitate ‘theological’ reflection in the context of pastoral care.

The final participant also provided a qualified response. When asked if “the ability of the chaplain to facilitate theological reflection that enables the careseeker to make those connections is influenced by the chaplain's own history of making those connections,” the participant responded, “I think the only way that works is if the chaplain is willing to share said connection and I know that a lot of chaplains now, especially are becoming more and more hesitant with themselves. We can be open. But you have to be very careful with it.”⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Follow-up Interview 007, October 5, 2017.

Other chaplains had discussed appropriate self-disclosure during the course of this study, but not in relation to facilitating theological reflection for others. Further probing and clarification revealed that this chaplain also seemed to have a limited understanding of what constituted facilitating ‘theological’ reflection.⁴⁴⁹ They later affirmed, “I think if you frame it in terms of the search rather than the connection, I think that would be a lot better.”⁴⁵⁰ They felt that sharing a similar faith background could help build a strong connection, but that it wasn’t always necessary. The chaplain then described working with a couple experiencing relationship difficulties and facilitating reflection between the husband and wife, though they did not use self-disclosure in this process. Unfortunately, problems with the internet connection precluded further questioning as to whether or not a sense of connection with these two careseekers enabled deeper reflection or not. The interview ended inconclusively.

Those chaplains who do not characterize their own behavior as facilitating ‘theological’ reflection, yet describe working with careseekers on spiritual and religious topics with strikingly similar language to that of the Christian literature on this kind of facilitation seem to share similar misconceptions. They perceive ‘theological’ reflection as primarily concerned with correct belief. That is, to facilitate ‘theological’ reflection, one needs to know what constitutes orthodoxy in a particular tradition, evaluate the careseeker’s statements according to that standard, and guide them toward correct belief. Therefore, chaplains claim they don’t facilitate ‘theological’ reflection because they hold concerns such as the fear of not knowing enough about

⁴⁴⁹ It is also entirely possible that I was simply phrasing the hypothesis poorly. There was a marked difference in response from the two participants who were primed to consider the topic via questions and then hear the hypothesis, versus those who heard the hypothesis and then the questions. Those who received the questions first appeared to better understand the hypothesis and respond to it more clearly, even when those responses included critiques and qualifications.

⁴⁵⁰ Follow-up Interview 007, October 5, 2017.

Christianity, “my main concern...is not what they believe in, whether or not it’s right,”⁴⁵¹ or “I’m not here to preach”⁴⁵² and impose my beliefs on the careseeker.

The responses from this hypothesis were rich in implications and verified the significance of this research. Buddhist chaplains may find it difficult to relate their work to standards of chaplaincy that are so deeply embedded in Christian language with which they may have little fluency and about which they may have many misconceptions. Developing materials on Buddhist chaplaincy from Buddhist viewpoints, using frameworks, theories, and language native to the Buddhist traditions could have tremendous benefit in helping Buddhists better understand their work as spiritual caregivers.

Hypothesis Four: Role of Experience in Connection

Hypothesis Four: Buddhist chaplains infrequently report a sense of personal connection to God or the divine and frequently report a sense of connection or a feeling of oneness, wholeness, interconnectedness, or emptiness; a sense of meaning or purpose for their own life; a very strong connection to other people; and, occasionally, a connection to a something sacred. Buddhist chaplains also tend to locate “authority” in these experiences, rather than in revelation of divine purpose, and use sacred texts as important guides to experience rather than as authoritative in-and-of themselves.

This hypothesis developed from the way participants spoke about the importance of experience, both in relation to reflection and practice, in initial interviews. Some chaplains responded to questions about sources for ideas on reflection by stating they didn’t really use them, instead preferring to rely on their own experience. Participants were asked if they experience connection to something sacred and how they would characterize it, as well as where

⁴⁵¹ Follow-up Interview 005, October 11, 2017.

⁴⁵² Follow-up Interview 003, October 5, 2017.

they locate “authority” and how they understand that term. A subset of this question included exploring the difference between analysis and “being present” and the different roles of each in spiritual care.

All participants responded to this hypothesis affirmatively and one, though affirmative, also presented a potential caveat based on a hypothetical situation, though their direct experience also affirmed the hypothesis. Regarding the hypothesis, one chaplain responded, “I think that does make a lot of sense because the experience, the action, you know, the practice, those are the authorities really. The results of the practice show the merit of doing them.”⁴⁵³

Practice was a common theme in the responses to this hypothesis, with chaplains referencing both their own personal spiritual practices, including meditation, and their practice of spiritual care. In some sense, this affirms the action-reflection-action model of clinical education. Through the practice of spiritual care, chaplains reported gaining confidence and “a sense of verified faith”⁴⁵⁴ in both the Dharma and in themselves as spiritual caregivers and Buddhists.

Moreover, several chaplains revealed unease or lack of resonance with traditions that they perceived to be over-reliant on scriptural sources of authority.⁴⁵⁵ One chaplain reported:

⁴⁵³ Follow-up Interview 007, October 5, 2017.

⁴⁵⁴ Follow-up Interview 005, October 11, 2017.

⁴⁵⁵ Specifically, they were uneasy with relying on external authority for beliefs that could not be verified through one’s own experience. I am not personally characterizing non-Buddhists, particularly Christians, as entirely reliant on scripture versus direct experience. In my experience, Christianity is also strongly based on one’s own direct experience of a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, per conversations with devout Christians. Likewise, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and other religions are also based on personal experiences, per William James’s early documentation of religious understanding. I am reporting the perceptions of the participants on this issue, which are that revealed religions tend to rely on personal experience to verify the existence and activity of God in one’s life and on scripture to understand more about the will of God for humanity in general. Whether or not these perceptions are correct is another matter entirely and an area for future interreligious dialogue and scholarship.

So for me, as a Buddhist, it's very strange and it's hard for me not to judge, you know, kind of view, like, "That's what it says right there." You know, "You're going to hell if x, y, z, if you don't do this. Accept Jesus Christ as your lord and savior. That's it." That kind of focus on belief on what's written on the text is very, seems very strange to me.⁴⁵⁶

Chaplains did point out, including the participant quoted above, that they too read scripture, but that the Buddhist scriptures also advise practitioners to verify their content through direct experience.

While the mindset described above (whether it accurately reflects the majority of Christians or not) seemed "very strange," the chaplains in this study also found commonality among their own experiences, those of Christian colleagues and careseekers, and those of other non-Buddhists. Moreover, their work with interreligious populations tended to strengthen this sense of commonality over time. Even chaplains who reported not having experienced a connection to God or the divine regularly connected to careseekers through other shared experiences, including song, chanting, prayer, and community. Several referenced the stance of not-knowing and cited the fallibility of language to accurately describe spiritual or mystical experiences. The same chaplain who described belief based on texts as "very strange" also reported thinking:

Huh, like, well this experience people can have of God, or what's labeled as God, or in a personified box, I think there was an analogous experience. I think we're experiencing some of the same things maybe just labeling it differently, perhaps. Putting different cognitive frames on that. And that's where I connect, so I definitely do connect with the concept of God...⁴⁵⁷

although they still feel uncomfortable with "God language" or talking about God's will in particular situations.

⁴⁵⁶ Follow-up Interview 008, October 5, 2017.

⁴⁵⁷ Follow-up Interview 007, October 5, 2017.

Another chaplain reported that her experience in CPE was similar to what her peer described as “the movement of the Holy Spirit.” This description helped her think about and articulate how:

When things are flowing well for me in a spiritual care visit or in any other interaction but especially in that. I'm not the one doing it, the Dharma is moving through. Right, and I think if we set aside our belief structures that we put on top of those experiences that some more mystically oriented or mature Christians have them as well. They just call them something else.⁴⁵⁸

Although this hypothesis was affirmed as a difference between Buddhist chaplains and their theistic peers, the participants were also clear in articulating strong commonalities with peers and careseekers of other religions in relation to religious experience. Responses to this hypothesis helped develop aspects of the thesis related to the importance of spiritual friendship across religious lines. Having spiritual friends of other religions was tremendously enriching for the chaplains in this study. Sometimes that spiritual friendship happened prior to CPE and sometimes during. Many of the more negative aspects of participants' CPE experiences correlated to a lack of spiritual friendship and to behavior that could not be characterized according to the criteria of spiritual friendship. Moreover, Buddhist chaplains who had spiritual friends of other religious traditions seemed better able to accompany careseekers of other religious traditions as spiritual friends themselves. This sample size is, of course, too small to generalize, but this aspect of the thesis holds true at least for the chaplains in this study.

Hypothesis Five: Hindrances

This hypothesis was presented as an either/or scenario from which participants were asked to pick which one better represented their experience:

EITHER

⁴⁵⁸ Follow-up Interview 005, October 11, 2017.

Hypothesis 5a: Buddhist chaplains are hindered in their ability to facilitate ‘theological’ reflection that helps careseekers connect with God or the divine due to a lack of personal experience with this connection.

OR

Hypothesis 5b: Buddhist chaplains are not hindered in their ability to facilitate ‘theological’ reflection that helps careseekers connect with God or the divine due to their ability to connect with something beyond themselves even though they do not conceptualize it as God or the divine.

This hypothesis developed from a need to clarify the basis for connection and the relationship between the experiences of seeking and connecting with others. This hypothesis often touched on themes explored in the earlier hypotheses, with questions such as, 1) “In what ways, if any, do you find that your experience of also seeking meaning, purpose, and goodness in your life, however understood, helps you connect with careseekers who also seek these things?” 2) “In what ways, if any, do you find that your experiences are so different from those of careseekers that sometimes it is hard to relate to what they’re going through or connect with them?” 3) “What hinders or aids your ability to make connections across religious or spiritual difference?” and 4) “What hinders or aids your ability to facilitate theological reflection for careseekers?” As a part of this line of questioning, I also inquired as to whether the follow-up interview participants had experienced situations in which they felt a strong connection with a careseeker that they were then unable to adequately explain to their CPE cohort, as a few participants reported in initial interviews.

Four participants responded in favor of hypothesis 5b, while one participant provided a noncommittal response. The noncommittal response was simply off-topic, and time precluded

further investigation. The four who affirmed the second hypothesis were unequivocal. One participant pointed out that spiritual care is “not just about compassionate connection,”⁴⁵⁹ but about what that connection makes possible, including reflection, healing, and growth.

In response this hypothesis, chaplains revealed more about the relationship between connection and practice, clearly interpreting “seeking” as a part of spiritual practice. Buddhist chaplains use their practice to overcome internal barriers that might otherwise prevent a connection with careseekers. Seeking is important, inasmuch as it is related to that practice. Not only does the practice help them develop mindfulness, but it also helps them develop a set of spiritual experiences that serve as a basis for mutual empathy with and connection to careseekers. For example, “I do think there’s some kind of connection point of like spiritual experience, but those are also shared point of human experience and dealing with human suffering. We’re all in the same boat, I think there’s solidarity there, um, in that connection,”⁴⁶⁰ one chaplain reported. They went on to explicitly affirm, “I think my Buddhist practice helps me a lot in facilitating,”⁴⁶¹ which other chaplains echoed. Practice cultivated compassion, self-care, mindfulness, awareness, being present, listening, curiosity, being open and agenda-less, observing, questioning, and various other traits and behaviors described above. The basis for that practice was seeking, because the motivation for practice is related to the desire to understand and seek liberation from suffering. Participants felt:

The effort of the search, effort of seeking. That translates regardless of tradition. Effort of making that search happen. And the effort to think the energy being put into trying to find an answer. That you don't have to have a tradition for that. You don't have to have a specific background for that. Everybody who's making the effort is making the effort.⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁹ Follow-up Interview 008, October 5, 2017.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Follow-up Interview 007, October 5, 2017.

This provided a basis for mutual empathy between careseeker and chaplain. The chaplains' own experiences of seeking provided a basis for assessing the careseeker's own seeking process and responding skillfully. Responses to this hypothesis helped further develop the hallmarks of spiritual friendship, particularly in relation to the wisdom developed in stage four of the Framework.

As a side note, one chaplain also reported a unique experience with her CPE supervisor relating to the fruits of Buddhist practice, especially the development of compassion. It is worth quoting here in its entirety:

Participant: I was so lucky to be in direct contact with my spiritual community. My Buddhist community was very close to where I was staying for the summer [during CPE], and I'm incredibly grateful for that, Monica, because I would have this experience out on the [hospital] floor of just compassion, radiating out of my body like heat, I mean that's powerful. And I could tell other people picked up on it. You know, you can tell by people's responses and that kind of thing and especially the careseekers. And it didn't happen every day. It happened a lot, it happened the most on heaviest clinical days. So, you know the pretty hour on call shift, it was like ka-bam. And even though I wrote about it in my reflections and I made casual, I didn't talk about so much with my peers, because it seemed it might lead to some comparison or not great ideas, but it did come up on different occasions. All this compassion was coming up and my supervisor just did not get it. She didn't, it bounced off of her and she kept telling me towards the end of our unit that I needed to bring my heart forward more and that my way of dealing with people was, that I use certain language from the Theravada tradition about like, you know, "I felt a flash of frustration arise" or I would say "frustration arises momentarily and goes away" like that's my lived experience of emotion at this point after practicing mindfulness meditation for close to 15 years. And she was like "there's not enough 'I' in there. You need to talk about yourself more," she wanted me to do something that is not in my religious tradition. [laughter] Like, it was the really mind-blowing part about this is, Monica, she was Unitarian Universalist, she wasn't a Christian. She just wasn't getting it. So, it definitely happened and I'm a pretty articulate person verbally, but I felt like there is this whole piece of if you don't have a deist orientation, if you're not super emotional and, I am pretty emotional, but like in the way that CPE wants you to be, somehow you're not making a heart connection and that's a load of crap.

Researcher: I am empathizing with you so strongly.

Participant: It was tough. And I just, it was in me and it was a good thing for me in my practice because it relieved me of the need to be seen by person in charge. I was just like, “you know what, I’m having this experience, this is not about her.” It is about, you know, this vessel [myself] and these other care seekers and yep...⁴⁶³

Regardless of what this excerpt reveals about assumptions (either founded or unfounded) regarding Christian and Unitarian Universalist supervisors, it also reveals some of the challenges chaplains in this study faced in attempting to justify the fruits of their practice—literal experiences of non-self—against supervisors’ expectations regarding the appropriate language with which one ought to describe one’s experiences. Were an awakened Buddhist practitioner, having fully realized the truth of nonself and gained the ability to fully prioritize the suffering of others (seeing no distinction between self and other), to enter CPE and describe their experiences to their supervisor, there is a good chance they might be diagnosed with a pathological disorder. Emphasis on appropriate emotional disclosure and self-care is important, especially in developing chaplains, but it need not invalidate the fruits of Buddhist practice. Chapter five describes these fruits in more detail as they relate to *prajñā*, nonself, impermanence, interdependence, emptiness, and the experience of and liberation from suffering through their realization. Exploring hypothesis five was helpful in not only characterizing the fruits of Buddhist practice, but also highlighting how those fruits interact with the modern context of chaplaincy.

Conclusion

I often describe my data-analysis method as “simmering”: collect enough data, stir thoroughly, let simmer, taste as needed, and it will boil in its own good time. When stirring and tasting, otherwise known as analysis, I often worry that the flavors will never come together—

⁴⁶³ Follow-up Interview 005, October 11, 2017.

that there is no pattern in the data. I fear that didn't ask the right questions or talk to the right people, or that their responses were simply too idiosyncratic. Yet I make myself continue to collect and analyze the data systematically, piece-by-piece. I have faith that the pattern will emerge. The human mind is a pattern-making machine, and it will find a pattern. Various patterns began to emerge early on, but none of them carried the weight of a theory until midway through the follow-up interviews. The pattern, when it did emerge, came through what I describe as an intuitive leap. It arrived almost fully formed early in the morning the day after three follow-up interviews, and it quickly took shape in a single page of my notebook.⁴⁶⁴

This was not unprecedented. In fact, when I was a student in the college of architecture, this was often how my best designs arrived (much to the irritation of my professors, who preferred a notebook full of progressive sketches to critique, rather than the finished set of construction drawings I usually provided). Over time, I have learned that the intuitive leap is not creation *ex nihilo*, to borrow a phrase from my Christian friends. My best designs and theories may emerge in a moment, but they are based on data meticulously collected and analyzed over days, weeks, months, or, sometimes, years. As a result, I have learned to trust in the process. In this case, I used the process of grounded theory research, which looks for patterns in the ground of the data, without reliance on previous theories. At least, I assumed I was not reliant on a previous theory.

The theory that emerged was not, in fact, new at all; it is at least 2,500 years old. I find this strangely comforting, because it affirms that I am not alone in observing this pattern. One could say I only found a pattern I was already primed to see. That may be true. It may likewise be true that the participants of this study were only enacting a pattern they were primed to enact.

⁴⁶⁴ This was revealed to me in a dream.

If that is the case, the pattern is there regardless of its origins. Buddhism would have us believe that it is Dharma and therefore a reflection of truth. The Buddha did not invent this pattern any more than I did; he merely described it. Of course, it has been 2,500 years since he purportedly described it, so something may have gotten lost in the telling.

This chapter, I confess, is largely a reconstruction. It summarizes some of the things I saw in the data, heard in the interviews, read in the reflections, and pondered in the analysis. It attempts, as best I am able, to reconstruct the causes and conditions that led to my intuitive leap and justify the theory that emerged. In many ways, this chapter is like a recipe, recounting the ingredients and the process of preparation. It is not, however, the final dish. Anyone who has followed a recipe knows that the final dish never quite looks like the picture in the book. Thus, I expect that I may not have fully accounted for how I got from here to there in every detail; how I took these ingredients, followed this process, and arrived at the final dish is explored in the next chapter. Nor would I expect another to be able to entirely duplicate my efforts and arrive at the same result.

I make no claims to being objective, only systematic and transparent. If, in hypothesis five, one hears echoes of a newly formed chaplain still grappling with a question her supervisor asked in the first days of her training, then one has simply been paying keen attention. These questions are not scholarly and detached; they are urgent and personal. I urgently need to know the answers in order to be a better chaplain for the careseeker who knocks on my door tomorrow and a better person for myself today. I have asked these questions in the most accessible ways I could devise, and I have tried to listen openly and honestly to the answers and report what I have heard as faithfully to the speaker's meaning as I can. I have probably failed a great deal of the time.

However, as I go over the data again and again, I become more and more convinced that the Three *Prajñās* as a learning process and the spiritual friend as a goal and paradigm for Buddhist chaplaincy are worthy of our attention. If I have not explained them properly, I hope another will follow and do better. In this chapter, they are presented in pieces, with the task of listening here, the outcome of wisdom over there, with compassion connected to nonself connected to emptiness connected to openheartedness, and contemplation wrapping around it all with multiple valences, but no comprehensive relationship between all the parts. This is the task that follows: to take what participants have said separately, on many topics, in response to many questions—about listening, contemplating, and practicing; about being seekers and students, chaplains and spiritual friends—and bring it together into a complete picture. It is my sincere hope that the Framework that emerged, the final dish, is *upāya* (skillful means), nourishing, and useful to other chaplains and teachers in their work. Please look and see for yourself.

Chapter 5: Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care

This chapter explores the interpretive theory I have named the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care. I call it an interpretive theory because it accounts for how Buddhist chaplains learn, first, to reflect on their own spiritual and religious lives as individuals; second, as part of a community or institution; third, how to reflect on their practice of spiritual care as chaplains; and fourth, how to accompany others as a spiritual friend in reflecting on that person's life. It is an interpretive theory because it interprets what the Buddhist chaplains in this study are doing via a concept native to the Dharma—the Three *Prajñās*—and in relation to four stages derived from an interpretation of the data collected from the Buddhist chaplains themselves. As such, this Framework is both an “interpretation” and “interpretive,” the latter because it offers its user the ability to interpret the behavior of Buddhist chaplains according to *prajñā*—listening, contemplating, or practicing—and stage—self, student, chaplain, or spiritual friend. This interpretation then enables the user to predict appropriate actions and outcomes in a given context.

This Framework does not attempt to reinvent the Three *Prajñās*,⁴⁶⁵ but rather to document the ways they are already being employed by a particular population in a specific context. I believe the participants in my study have largely remained faithful to the traditional meaning of the Three *Prajñās* as they travel into the new territory of professional Buddhist chaplaincy in North America. I have likewise attempted to remain true to the traditional meaning not for the sake of orthodoxy, but because within the Buddhist literature, the Three *Prajñās* themselves are an attempt to document the best way to learn the Dharma. They are not invented

⁴⁶⁵ When referencing the original concept from the Dharma, I shall refer to it as the Three *Prajñās* (wisdom derived from listening, contemplating, and practicing). When referencing the interpretive theory developed from this research, including its four stages (self, student, chaplain, and spiritual friend), I shall refer to it as the Framework.

rules that must be followed, but rather, much like this research, a roadmap of reality. One can learn through many different methods employed in many different orders; the *Buddhadharma* merely asserts that, in observing enlightened masters training many students, this is the best way to proceed in relation to the path to awakening.

I heed this guidance while also attempting to accurately describe how Buddhist chaplains are proceeding—not how they ought to proceed—in employing (or not employing) the Three *Prajñās* in relation to their practice of spiritual care with interreligious populations. My thesis is that Buddhist chaplains who sufficiently develop the Three *Prajñās* for themselves as students and as chaplains are then better able to employ them as spiritual friends accompanying others in times of need. Moreover, chaplains who neglect an earlier stage are less able to practice the Three *Prajñās* at a later stage. For example, a chaplain who has not been themselves facilitated through reflection in stage two or three, may find it difficult to facilitate reflection for others. The Three *Prajñās* are cumulative and recursive. When practicing the Three *Prajñās* at a later stage, the chaplain relies on wisdom developed in (and through ongoing practice of) the earlier stages as well.⁴⁶⁶

This chapter includes a description of how the Framework emerged from the data, as referenced explicitly by several chaplains and referred to implicitly by others. A literature review summarizes the Three *Prajñās* according to the Buddhist scriptures, compendiums, and modern literature. As we will see, the Three *Prajñās* are a relatively minor concept in the otherwise

⁴⁶⁶ At this point, I must remind both the reader and myself that the Three *Prajñās* are not synonymous with the acts of listening, contemplating, and practicing. Rather, the Three *Prajñās* are the wisdom derived from those acts, the results of those acts. They are the outcomes of having listened, contemplated, and practiced well and toward a specific purpose: awakening. Although the Three *Prajñās* may be described in shorthand as listening-contemplating-practicing, it should be remembered at all times that this is in reference to wisdom developed through that act, not simply the generic act.

massive and highly detailed literature of Buddhism and in relation to the topic of *prajñā*, wisdom, itself. However, the concept is notable in its ubiquity in all three major branches of Buddhism and across many extant schools.

It is important to understand the traditional basis of the Three *Prajñās* before proceeding to a complete explanation of the Framework, which I present first in the form of a traditional Buddhist sutra, then more academically. Following a complete explanation of the Framework, I explain the three ways in which it was validated: 1) against the Dharma, 2) within the data, and 3) via participant feedback in follow-up interviews. I then briefly conclude by exploring limitations, contradictions, and omissions.

Emergence of the Framework

I was familiar with the concept of the Three *Prajñās*, or three wisdoms based on listening, contemplating, and practicing, prior to starting this research. It is a minor concept within the Dharma, but common throughout Buddhism. During an initial interview, a participant explicitly referenced the Three *Prajñās* in relation to a question about reflection:

Researcher: And I'm wondering if you remember when was the first time you were introduced to the idea of practicing reflection in relation to your spiritual or religious life?

Participant: Um...can you define “reflection?”

Researcher: Well, I don't want to predispose you, but just kind of reflection as in carefully considering your religious beliefs, meanings, your spiritual life in relation to your experience or in relation to some kind of religious teaching.

Participant: Hmm...Um, well I'll just throw a bunch of things out there and you can tell me what is relevant. [laughs]

Researcher: Okay. [laughs]

Participant: 'Cause that question reminds me of so many things. So, one is the Three *Prajñās*, right? So, hearing, contemplating, and meditating. And, so, you know, hearing teachings, yada-yada, retaining information, and then contemplating, which is like wrestling with information. And I think I learned that formally when I took my vows, refuge vows, in college. Like engaging in reflection in an active way, like, “I don't understand what generosity really is,” and “What does it mean to have

ultimate generosity?” and, “How does that apply to my life or this particular moment in which I felt that person was being thrifty?” or, you know, whatever. So, this sort of active cognitive process. And then there's maybe, what you can say is a different kind of reflection, which is meditating. Just actually being present to what's there, and tracking it and following it, and being flexible and willing to just follow what's there. Which isn't traditionally reflection, but, in some ways, it's like...uh, maybe more often what I do. When people say, “Oh! When you reflect on that, what do you think?” And I usually actually just watch, like, “What is happening right now when I'm angry or when I'm grieving?” And then just track what's there...then I'll also say that retreat is a big part of my life. Um, formal retreat practice. So, you know, multiple days to weeks of time set aside for hearing, contemplating, and meditating. So, there's a very intentional push to deepen my reflection about my understanding of my tradition, my behavior, how it interfaces with my profession. You know, moral reflection is part of that, too.⁴⁶⁷

This participant, after naming the Three *Prajñās*, elaborated on the relationship between the final two—contemplation and practice—in a manner that typified many of the interview participants. While reflection was understood by most as a cognitive (or even discursive) process, Buddhist reflection also employs awareness and other mental skills gained from meditation. Buddhist chaplains report that meditative awareness of their own inner thought processes, emotional and physical states, assumptions, and unspoken responses to others provided primary material for later reflection (e.g., reflecting on why I was so angry when I was with that patient or reflecting on why my shoulders tensed when he said that). Moreover, the participants in this study all employ meditative awareness for active listening in conversations with careseekers, as well as with themselves.⁴⁶⁸ Thus, we see that for Buddhist chaplains,

⁴⁶⁷ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

⁴⁶⁸ There is more work to be done here in connecting the Framework to the Noble Eightfold Path; I simply have not had the time to do so in this work. Let me say briefly that the three aspects of the path are *prajñā*, *sīla*, and *samādhi*, or wisdom, moral behavior, and concentration or meditation. *Prajñā* is dealt with in detail, and its two aspects, Right Intention and Right View, are developed in the sections below. *Samādhi* is included in the Framework as part of wisdom based on contemplation (at its initial stages) and wisdom based on meditation (at its more-developed stages), though I have made no effort to align its constituent aspects, Right

reflection can take on the same kind of meditative “flavor” as formal, on-the-cushion meditation. As we shall see in the literature review below, this aligns with the explanation of the Three *Prajñās* found in the earliest Buddhist texts.

Another participant referenced the Three *Prajñās* implicitly in their written reflection, stating: “The issue [the careseeker faced], more or less, has been intuited through study, contemplation, and practice of the Dharma.”⁴⁶⁹ It is not entirely clear if the participant is using the Three *Prajñās*, but “study” is one possible translation of the first type of wisdom, and the threefold typology does otherwise align. However, even if they did not make such an explicit reference, this quote provides evidence that the participant may have been exposed to the framework implicitly, as part of the way Buddhism is taught and practiced throughout the world. These two interview subjects represent Vajrayana and Theravada perspectives respectively, while the third subject, below, represents a Mahayana perspective.

Finally, in the first follow-up interview (prior to the development of the Framework), a participant explicitly described wisdom derived from listening-contemplating-practicing using a Japanese compound term for it:

Participant: At least for myself, my experience, of course, the CPE supervisors emphasize action-reflection-action. But my experience, my interpretation is that Buddhist tradition of, in Japanese, *monshishu*. *Mon*, three Chinese characters.⁴⁷⁰ The first one is listening or hearing. The *shi* is thinking or contemplation. And the *shu* is the practice. So, I found that this fits better to me, of course, I’ve been doing action-reflection-action but in

Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration, with the Framework. Finally, *sīla*, comprised of Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood, is implicit in the model of the *kalyāṇamitra*, or “spiritual friend,” as a moral exemplar, but this is not explored in any detail. While I am aware that the correspondences exist and further comparison could yield useful theoretical connections, I chose to stay closer to the data collected from study participants in my discussion. See “eightfold path,” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 279-280.

⁴⁶⁹ Reflection 009, September 3, 2017.

⁴⁷⁰ One character each for syllable—*mon*, *shi*, and *shu*—not three characters for *mon*.

addition, action means a practice, to practice. Reflection is a kind of contemplation. I needed the third one or the first one, listening and learning. It's like learning, studying. So, I've been thinking on reading, rereading Buddhist text to find out their guiding principle, guiding teaching for me as a chaplain. And I've just finished the residency at the end of the August, and I did nine CPE units.

Researcher: Wow. Congratulations!

Participant: Yeah but I found myself...I'm comfortable with myself as I am now. And at the beginning I was struggling, how can I be a Buddhist at the same time a chaplain? But I'm very much comfortable being a chaplain and a Buddhist.⁴⁷¹

This participant clearly described the Three *Prajñās* and consciously employed them in response to discomfort with the action-reflection-action model.

I strongly empathized with this participant's statement as I, too, felt uncomfortable with the action-reflection-action model of learning in spiritual care. To some extent, I am still uncomfortable with it. I felt, as this participant did, that a period of learning, study, and contemplation needs to precede action. I occasionally reversed the model in my mind, from action-reflection to reflection-action. I wondered if the learning and study that preceded the first "action" were simply implicit, as though a religious person would naturally study before stepping into the role of a chaplain (or chaplain intern) for the first time. However, this was not my experience in CPE. Some of my peers were first-semester chaplaincy students, starting their rounds as chaplain interns before completing any coursework. I internally questioned this practice at the time, from the vantage point of one who had completed three full years of MDiv curriculum before beginning my CPE training. I felt far more prepared than my peers beginning their own graduate programs. However, I cannot objectively say that, because of my education, I made fewer missteps or that I was any better of a chaplain than they were. Though I had no effective response to the action-reflection-action model at the time, I continued to experience a

⁴⁷¹ Follow-up Interview 003, October 5, 2017.

vague sense of discomfort in its use. I was also extremely thankful that I had studied so long prior to offering spiritual care to others.

This participant's description of a similar discomfort with the action-reflection-action model and his own accommodation with it through the substitution of *monshishu*, or wisdom based on listening-contemplating-practicing, struck me almost with a sense of relief. Here was the comfortable formula I had been seeking all this time. It sparked my curiosity in the Three *Prajñās*, which I had formerly taken for granted. The diagram below approximates the first notebook sketch of the theory, which I developed shortly after this interview.

Three *Prajñās* Theory of Reflection in Spiritual Care

Chaplains who have sufficiently listened-contemplated-practiced in their own lives,

LISTENING *śrutamayīprajñā*

Chaplain
Inquires

Careseeker shares
knowledge &
understanding

Chaplain actions:

- Questioning
- Showing curiosity
- Listening
- Not-Knowing
- Accepting
- Being Open

Outcomes for Careseeker:

- Feeling heard
- Connecting
- Feeling accepted
- Experiencing catharsis

CONTEMPLATING *cintāmayīprajñā*

Chaplain
Invites

Careseeker
reflects on beliefs
& knowledge in
light of present
experience or
circumstances

Chaplain actions:

- Questioning
- Being present
- Drawing out
- Seeing patterns
- Focusing
- Following

Outcomes for Careseeker:

- Understanding
- Having insight
- Reaffirming
- Finding strengths & resources

PRACTICING *bhāvanāmayīprajñā*

Chaplain
Assesses
(& Acts)

How careseeker's
beliefs,
knowledge, &
values are
functioning in
their life

Chaplain actions:

- Responding
- Reframing
- Supporting
- Empowering
- Challenging

Outcomes for Careseeker:

- Readjusting
- Adapting
- Coping
- Letting go
- Strengthening

This was my first draft of the Framework, and it contextualizes the following literature review in relation to spiritual care. This early draft was improved through continuous analysis of the data and literature. Before I could continue to fully develop the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care, I first needed to understand the Three *Prajñās* as they exist in Buddhist literature, including sacred texts from the three branches, compendiums, and contemporary texts.

Literature Review of the Three *Prajñās*

The earliest known appearance of these three terms listed together is from chapter thirty-three of the *Dīgha Nikāya*.⁴⁷² It appears as a passing reference in a list of threefold concepts intended to be chanted as a mnemonic device retained from the original oral tradition (one presumes). This reference is expanded upon in the *Abhidhamma*,⁴⁷³ but again, only briefly. The *Visuddhimagga*, or “Path of Purification,” a fifth-century CE text by Buddhaghosa, includes the threefold framework,⁴⁷⁴ but does not expand on it in any significant way beyond the *Abhidhamma*.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² Maurice O’C. Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 486.

⁴⁷³ Gotama Buddha, *Vibhanga: The Book of Analysis, Pali* (Rangoon, Burma: Pali Text Society, 1969), Chapter 16 Analysis of Knowledge, section 3 “Tikamatika”, 181, http://tipitaka.wikia.com/wiki/Vibhanga,_Pali.

⁴⁷⁴ Buddhaghosa and Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification: Visuddhimagga* (Seattle, WA: BPE Pariyatti Editions, 1999), 433-434.

⁴⁷⁵ These three texts are part of the Pāli-language Buddhist tradition that are still used in south and southeast Asia. The *Dīgha Nikāya* and *Abhidhamma* are both part of the *Tripiṭaka*, the canonical sacred texts of Theravada Buddhism. It was recorded several hundred years after the Buddha’s death, based on oral tradition. The *Tripiṭaka*, or “Three Baskets,” is comprised of the *Sutta Piṭaka* (sometimes also called the *Nikayas*) or the collection of sayings of the Buddha, attributed directly to the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama; the *Vinaya*, or the rules of discipline for monastics; and the *Abhidhamma*, or compilations of doctrines by learned elders from the time of the Buddha and shortly thereafter. See “*tripiṭaka*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 924.

It is not until we leave the Pāli texts, which were originally compiled in Sri Lanka, and move north to the Sanskrit *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma*,⁴⁷⁶ compiled in northern India, that we find a lengthier treatment of the Three *Prajñās* within a highly structured soteriological system. It is this formulation of the Three *Prajñās* upon which later Mahayana and Vajrayana authors (including Gompopa⁴⁷⁷ and Tsongkapa⁴⁷⁸) appear to rely. Modern teachers from all three branches of Buddhism, including Reginald Ray, Padmasiri De Silva, Bhikkhu Bodhi, Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, Sakyong Mipham, and others, continue to reference the Three *Prajñās* when explaining how to learn the Dharma or how meditation relates to study and reflection.

As we can see, the Three *Prajñās* is a concept dating back to the earliest Buddhist texts, persisting throughout the ages in all three major branches, and of relevance to modern teachers. Nevertheless, I still characterize it as a “minor” concept within the Dharma, both in terms of the amount of time most teachers dedicate to exploring it (usually no more than a paragraph or two), and also in terms of its simplicity. I surmise that teachers need only briefly convey the Three *Prajñās* due to this simplicity. They are easy to understand and apply, which may have also contributed to their broad appeal and longevity.

But what precisely are the Three *Prajñās* that I repeatedly reference? This literature review will examine the Pāli and Sanskrit roots of the terms; present their earliest explications in

⁴⁷⁶ The *Sarvāstivāda* school, or “Teaching That All Exists,” developed one of the most complex systems of *Abhidharma* no later than the first century CE, in Sanskrit. Although no longer an extant school of Buddhism, the *Sarvāstivāda* had a lasting impact on later Mahayana and Vajrayana schools in large part due to the spread of their *Abhidharma* along central Asian trade routes. See “*Sarvāstivāda*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 780-781.

⁴⁷⁷ Reginald A. Ray, *The Tibetan Buddhism Reader* (Boston: Shambhala, 2011), 49.

⁴⁷⁸ Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Understanding the Mind: Lorig, the Nature and Power of the Mind* (Ulverston, UK: Tharpa Publications, 2007), 207.

the *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Abhidamma*, and *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma*; cover the minor disagreements in their use, and then summarize how they are employed by modern Buddhist teachers.

Defining the Three Prajñās

According to *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, the Three *Prajñās* are *śrutamayīprajñā*, *cintāmayīprajñā*, and *bhāvanāmayīprajñā* in Sanskrit, commonly translated as the “wisdom derived from hearing or learning,”⁴⁷⁹ the “wisdom derived from contemplation or analysis,”⁴⁸⁰ and the “wisdom derived from meditation or generated from cultivation,”⁴⁸¹ respectively. In Pāli, they are *sutamayā paññā*, *cintāmayā paññā*, and *bhāvanāmayā paññā*.

There is no single common translation for the three terms, as we can see from the table:

Term	Translation from Sanskrit	Translation from Pāli	Modern Usage
<i>śruta</i> / <i>suta</i> ...	Hearing, learning, or study ⁴⁸²	Learning or heard ⁴⁸³	Hearing ⁴⁸⁴ or listening ⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁷⁹ See “*śrutamayīprajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 856.

⁴⁸⁰ See “*cintāmayīprajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 193.

⁴⁸¹ See “*bhāvanāmayīprajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 113.

⁴⁸² See “*śrutamayīprajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 856.

⁴⁸³ See “*Anguttara Nikaya*” in *Pali-English Glossary*, 1883; “*Visuddhimagga*” in *Pali-English Glossary*, 787.

⁴⁸⁴ Reginald A. Ray, “How to Study the Dharma,” *Lion’s Roar* (blog) May 1, 2004, <https://www.lionsroar.com/how-to-study-the-dharma/>; Eric Rainbeau, *Basic Sobriety: Shambhala Buddhism and the Twelve Steps* (Tampa, FL: Empedrado Street Press, 2016), n.p., section on “Hearing, Contemplating, Meditating”; and Jamgon Kongtru Lodro Taye, *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Seven and Book Eight, Parts One and Two, Fundamentals of Buddhist Study and Practice*, trans. Richard Barron (Snow Lion, 2013), 261.

⁴⁸⁵ Gyatso, *Understanding the Mind*, 207.

<i>cintā</i> ...	Reflection or analysis ⁴⁸⁶	Reasoning ⁴⁸⁷ or thinking ⁴⁸⁸	Contemplating ⁴⁸⁹ or reflecting ⁴⁹⁰
<i>Bhāvanā</i> ...	Cultivation or meditation ⁴⁹¹	Development, ⁴⁹² mental development, ⁴⁹³ making be ⁴⁹⁴	Meditating ⁴⁹⁵ or cultivation ⁴⁹⁶

As we can see from the above table, the translations of these terms have commonalities, but little consistency in the literature; even the tenses and forms (ending in -ing or -tion) are inconsistent from one use to the next, though this may be a result of the author's choice of sentence structure. Both Sanskrit and Pāli use compound words, leading to the same middle and ending for all three compounds, *-mayīprajñā* and *-maya paññā*, respectively.⁴⁹⁷ The middle part,

⁴⁸⁶ See “*śrutamayīprajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 856.

⁴⁸⁷ See “*Visuddhimagga*” in *Pali-English Glossary*, 778.

⁴⁸⁸ Untitled glossary page, *Ancient Buddhist Texts*, <https://www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net/Reference/BD.htm>.

⁴⁸⁹ Gyatso, *Understanding the Mind*, 207; Rainbeau, *Basic Sobriety*, n.p., section on “Hearing, Contemplating, Meditating”; and Taye, *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Seven and Book Eight, Parts One and Two*, 261.

⁴⁹⁰ Liew, “The *Sarvāstivāda* Doctrine of the Path of Spiritual Progress,” 295-296.

⁴⁹¹ See “*śrutamayīprajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 856.

⁴⁹² See “*Anguttara Nikaya*” in *Pali-English Glossary*, 1878; “*Visuddhimagga*” in *Pali-English Glossary*, 782.

⁴⁹³ <https://www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net/Reference/BD.htm>

⁴⁹⁴ See “*Visuddhimagga*” in *Pali-English Glossary*, 782.

⁴⁹⁵ Gyatso, *Understanding the Mind*, 207; Rainbeau, *Basic Sobriety*, n.p., section on “Hearing, Contemplating, Meditating”; Taye, *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Seven and Book Eight, Parts One and Two*, 261.

⁴⁹⁶ Jew Chong Liew, “The *Sarvāstivāda* Doctrine of the Path of Spiritual Progress: A Study Based Primarily on the *Abhidharma-Mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*, the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* and Their Chinese and Sanskrit Commentaries,” (PhD diss., University of Hong Kong, 2009), 295-296.

⁴⁹⁷ The use of spaces or hyphens between the three terms of the compound is inconsistent across authors in both Sanskrit and Pāli. I have chosen the most commonly used forms.

mayī or *maya*, is regularly translated as “based on,”⁴⁹⁸ “derived from,”⁴⁹⁹ “generated by,”⁵⁰⁰ “consisting in,”⁵⁰¹ or “by means of,”⁵⁰² indicating a dependent relationship between the first term and the last. In other words, the final term, *prajñā* or *paññā* cannot exist without the first term, either *śruta/suta*, *cintā*, or *bhāvanā*, or, at least, cannot exist in the form it does without the first.

Prajñā and *paññā*, Sanskrit and Pāli respectively, are very common words within the *Buddhadharma* and most frequently translated as “wisdom.” However, *The Princeton Dictionary* points out that this term is perhaps “closer to ‘gnosis,’ ‘awareness,’ and in some contexts ‘cognition’; the term has the general sense of accurate and precise understanding, but is used most often to refer to an understanding of reality that transcends ordinary comprehension.”⁵⁰³ As such, *prajñā* is a multivalent term, which I shall explore further in a later section. However, let us first turn to developing a complete understanding of the compound terms. Moving forward, I use Sanskrit when referring to the original terms and the English words “listening, contemplating, and practicing” as my preferred translation.

According to *The Princeton Dictionary*, the compound term *śrutamayīprajñā* is:

“wisdom derived from hearing [viz., learning],” the first of the three types of wisdoms, which refers to understanding derived from listening to (and, by extension, reading and studying about) the dharma. This type of

⁴⁹⁸ See “*śrutamayīprajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 856; “*cintāmayīprajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 193; “*bhāvanāmayīprajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 113.

⁴⁹⁹ Liew, “The *Sarvāstivāda* Doctrine of the Path of Spiritual Progress,” 47.

⁵⁰⁰ See “*bhāvanāmayīprajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 113.

⁵⁰¹ Buddhaghosa and Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification*, 433-434.

⁵⁰² Gotama Buddha, *Vibhanga: The Book of Analysis*, trans. U. Thittila (1969, repr., Rangoon, Burma: Pali Text Society, 2010), 410, accessed via Wikipitaka website, <http://tipitaka.wikia.com/wiki/Vibhanga-Scanned-Chap.16>.

⁵⁰³ See “*prajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 655.

wisdom provides a grounding for the development of mental attention and concentration, which is crucial for meditative calmness (*śamatha*).⁵⁰⁴

In other words, it encompasses knowledge based on testimony and knowledge gained at an intellectual level from hearing or reading an explanation provided by someone else. This would be analogous to reading in a book that Paris is the capital of France without ever having been to Paris oneself. Some epistemologists contend that this type of knowledge depends on the reliability of the source and may not even constitute knowledge at all.⁵⁰⁵

In the case of the Pāli *suttas* and Mahayana sutras, the historical Buddha is the purported source. Therefore, when the Buddha states that craving is the cause of suffering, one may accept this statement initially on faith in the awakened wisdom of the Buddha. However, it is not sufficient for one's own awakening to "know" this truth on the basis of faith alone. One must also investigate it within one's own experience, which brings us to the second type of wisdom.

According to *The Princeton Dictionary*, the meaning of the compound term *cintāmayīprajñā* is:

"wisdom derived from reflection [or analysis]"; the second of the three types of wisdom... Building upon what one has learned through *Śrutamayīprajñā*, the practitioner deepens that knowledge by reflecting upon its significance and its application in understanding the nature of this world and beyond. This reflection may involve a certain level of mental attention and concentration, but not yet full meditative calmness (*śamatha*).⁵⁰⁶

In other words, this encompasses both reasoned belief and, to some extent, introspection. It would be analogous to reading in several books that Paris is the capital of France, verifying

⁵⁰⁴ See "*śrutamayīprajñā*" in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 856.

⁵⁰⁵ Matthias Steup, "Epistemology," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2017 Edition, ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/epistemology>.

⁵⁰⁶ See "*cintāmayīprajñā*" in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 193.

this in conversation with a French citizen, and comparing it to other facts about France. Through this sort of analysis, one develops confidence that Paris is indeed the capital of France, even though one has not yet personally travelled there. One also fully understands the significance and application of this knowledge. If, for example, one wanted to visit the French capital or petition the French government, logically, one might travel to Paris, not to another city. However, this is still an intellectual form of knowledge integrated within a system of knowledge on other topics, some intellectual and some experiential. It still lacks full verification and is prone to error and bias.

Finally, *The Princeton Dictionary* explains *bhāvanāmayīprajñā* as being:

lit. “wisdom generated by cultivation”; often translated as “wisdom derived from meditation”; the third of the three types of wisdom...Although the general understanding is that this third and final manifestation of wisdom comes after, and is largely dependent on, the previous two types, *bhāvanāmayīprajñā* is considered to be the highest of these three because it is the culmination of one's efforts to cultivate the path (*mārga*) and the product of direct spiritual experience. This third type of wisdom is a form of *vipaśyanā*, an understanding of reality at the level of *śamatha*—profound concentration coupled with tranquility.⁵⁰⁷

This is wisdom derived from a direct experience of truth, experiences primarily achieved through advanced meditation and marked by calm and clarity. In other words, one has now travelled to Paris. One can, with complete confidence and clarity, say that Paris is the capital of France based on first-hand knowledge.

Likewise with the Dharma. It is not enough to memorize the teachings handed down in sacred texts or from learned teachers. Nor is it sufficient to come to a reasoned conclusion through analysis and contemplation. One must test all truths against one's own direct experience. However, this should not be confused with perception. The ancient Buddha and modern

⁵⁰⁷ See “*bhāvanāmayīprajñā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 113.

epistemologists, philosophers, and psychologists can describe many ways in which our perceptions routinely fail us. Rather than just seeing, hearing, and smelling Paris, one directly experiences of Paris through a mind (which is a perceptual filter) purified of all biases (in the forms of craving, aversion, and delusion). As a spiritual exercise, meditation plays a primary role in this purification and direct experience. The Buddha achieved enlightenment while meditating under the bodhi tree in India. Meditation has thus been the vehicle for enlightenment for Buddhists for over two thousand years for access to ultimate truth.

The Three Prajñās in Ancient Texts

We can see in these three definitions a clear progression from wisdom based on listening, to contemplating, to practicing. However, in the Pāli literature (*Dīgha Nikāya*, *Abhidhamma*, and *Visuddhimagga*), this order is slightly different, starting with wisdom based on contemplating, then listening, then practicing. The present order, which is ubiquitous in modern literature by Theravada,⁵⁰⁸ Mahayana, and Vajrayana authors first occurs in the *Sarvastivada Abhidharma*. Its prevalence in contemporary literature demonstrates the ongoing impact of the now-extinct *Sarvastavada* school. The order of the terms is important because the terms themselves make epistemological distinctions, document the most prevalent approach to learning the Dharma, and also inform normative assumptions about how one ought to progress on the path of awakening.

The Three *Prajñās* appear in chapter thirty-three of the *Dīgha Nikāya* as follows:

(43) ‘Three more kinds of wisdom: based on thought, on learning [hearing], on mental development [meditation] (*cintamaya panna*, *sutamaya panna*, *bhavanamaya panna*).⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁸ In theory, Theravada authors might draw more on the Pāli literature, thus referencing the contemplating-listening-practicing order, but this does not appear to be the case. My survey of contemporary Theravada authors was not exhaustive.

⁵⁰⁹ *Aparāpi tisso pannā – cintāmayā pannā, sutamayā pannā, bhāvanāmayā pannā*; Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 486.

No further explication is found in this chapter, nor do these terms appear elsewhere in the *Nikāyas*.⁵¹⁰

They are explicated in chapter sixteen of the *Vibhanga*, or “Book of Analysis,” part of the Pāli *Abhidhamma*, or compilations of doctrines. (The *Visuddhimagga*, or “The Path of Purification,” a later compilation of important Pāli texts by Buddhaghosa, includes this same passage.)⁵¹¹ This book first summarizes the list of three-fold things as found in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and then explicates each in turn. Per an English translation by U. Thittila,⁵¹² for the Three *Prajñās* it states:

768. Therein what is ‘wisdom by means of thinking’? (The wisdom) In the spheres of work invented by ingenuity or in the spheres of craft invented by ingenuity or in the branches of science invented by ingenuity or (knowledge that) action is one’s own possession or (knowledge that) in conformity with truth matter is impermanent; feeling; :P: perception; :P: mental concomitants; [325] :P: or consciousness is impermanent; that

⁵¹⁰ I am by no means an expert on the Pāli language or the Pāli Buddhist canon. I make this assertion based on a digital search of the *Tripitaka* for the terms “*cintāmayā panna*,” “*sutamayā panna*,” and “*bhāvanāmayā panna*” and their starting roots, “*cintā*,” “*suta*,” and “*bhāvanā*” in the Wikipitaka database, http://tipitaka.wikia.com/wiki/Main_Page, via Google, and via Google books. I found no other instances of the “-*mayā panna*” construction or the grouping of “*cintā*,” “*suta*,” and “*bhāvanā*.” If other scholars are aware of further instances in the Pāli canon, I urge them to contact me.

⁵¹¹ Buddhaghosa and Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification*, 433-434.

⁵¹² The original reads:

3. *Tikaniddeso*

768. (1. *Ka*) *tattha katamā cintāmayā pannā?*

Yogavihitesu vā kammāyatanesu yogavihitesu vā sippāyatanesu yogavihitesu vā vijjāṭṭhānesu kammassakataṃ vā saccānulomikaṃ vā rūpaṃ aniccanti vā vedanā...pe... sannā... saṅkhārā... vinnāṇaṃ aniccanti vā, yaṃ evarūpiṃ anulomikaṃ khantiṃ diṭṭhiṃ ruciṃ muditaṃ pekkhaṃ dhammanijjhānakkhantiṃ parato assutvā paṭilabhati - ayaṃ vuccati “cintāmayā panna”.
(*Kha*) *tattha katamā sutamayā pannā?* *Yogavihitesu vā kammāyatanesu yogavihitesu vā sippāyatanesu yogavihitesu vā vijjāṭṭhānesu kammassakataṃ vā saccānulomikaṃ vā rūpaṃ aniccanti vā vedanā...pe... sannā... saṅkhārā... vinnāṇaṃ aniccanti vā, yaṃ evarūpiṃ anulomikaṃ khantiṃ diṭṭhiṃ ruciṃ muditaṃ pekkhaṃ dhammanijjhānakkhantiṃ parato sutvā paṭilabhati - ayaṃ vuccati “sutamayā panna”.*

(*Ga*) *sabbāpi samāpannassa pannā bhāvanāmayā pannā.*

(Gotama Buddha, *Vibhanga*, Pali, 181, http://tipitaka.wikia.com/wiki/Vibhanga,_Pali).

which is similar, inconformity, ability (to comprehend), view, choice, opinion, seeing, ability to apprehend (these) states, is acquired without hearing from others. This is called wisdom by means of thinking.

P = Is impermanent. [sic]

Therein what is ‘wisdom by means of hearing’? (The wisdom) In spheres of work invented by ingenuity or in the spheres of craft invented by ingenuity or in the branches of science invented by ingenuity or (knowledge that) action is one’s own possession or (knowledge that) in conformity with truth matter is impermanent; feeling; :P: perception; :P: mental concomitants; [325] :P: or consciousness is impermanent; that which is similar, inconformity, ability (to comprehend), view, choice, opinion, seeing, ability to apprehend (these) states, is acquired by hearing from others. This is called wisdom by means of hearing.

All wisdom of one who has attained, is, wisdom by means of development.⁵¹³

Here we can see the basis for the reversal of the order of the first two terms. Wisdom developed through contemplation is explored first, perhaps on the assumption that individuals have already given thought to these matters prior to seeking teachings from the Buddha or his disciples. Moreover, it seems that wisdom can arise from reflecting on one’s own experience prior to hearing the Dharma from another. Indeed, the Buddha’s own life story indicates this is possible. His observation of impermanence, aging, illness, and death spurred him to seek out teachers on the spiritual path. Though he benefited from listening to these learned teachers, ultimately, he left them to achieve awakening on his own. The Dharma he discovered was never explained to him by another. Thus, he achieved it through contemplating and practicing, and he then transmitted it to others, who listened. As a result, many Buddhist scriptures begin with the classic words, “Thus, I have heard [from the Buddha]...”

Moreover, in the *Abhidamma*, we see the first explanation of what the wisdom gained by contemplation, listening, and practicing actually is: the wisdom of the ownership of one’s actions

⁵¹³ Gotama Buddha, *Vibhanga*, 424-425.

(*kamma*) and the wisdom of impermanence (*anicca*). Action, more commonly known by the Sanskrit term “karma,” follows the laws of causation. That is, through one’s own actions, one sows seeds from which one must reap the fruit, primarily the fruit of birth and death in an endless cycle of becoming (*samsara*).⁵¹⁴ That which is impermanent—matter, feeling, perception, mental concomitants, and consciousness—are known as the five aggregates (*skandhas*) that make up a person, that which is constantly changing. The Buddha uses the five aggregates to demonstrate that nowhere within any one of them, nor in their combination, can be found a self (*ātman*), thus demonstrating the doctrine of nonself (*anātman*).⁵¹⁵ Therefore, wisdom is the apprehension of *karma*, impermanence, the compounded nature of phenomena (*pratītyasamutpāda*), and nonself.

While this wisdom can be apprehended for oneself through contemplating one’s direct experience (impermanence being the most obvious example in daily life), it is often necessary to learn about them from listening to others, particularly in relation to their subtler concepts, such as nonself. However, to really grasp them, to turn intellectual knowledge into gnosis, one must achieve wisdom through mental cultivation. In both the original order⁵¹⁶ and the later ordering of

⁵¹⁴ The cycle of becoming is understood to both include literal birth and death and also the metaphorical “birth” and “death” of various phenomena from moment to moment. The person I am in this moment predicates the person I am in the next moment, but they are not the same. Thus, the cycle of action also exists within an ongoing flow of impermanent phenomena, always rising and falling away based on causes and conditions. For more on this, see “*karman*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 420.

⁵¹⁵ For more, see “*skandha*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 828.

⁵¹⁶ That the order found in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and the *Abhidhamma* is the “original” order cannot be definitively asserted. The Pāli canon was first written down in Sri Lanka around the same time as the canon was being recorded in Sanskrit in northern India. Both are based on earlier oral traditions. Many parts of the two canons correspond. However, parts of the Sanskrit canon have also been lost or exist only in Tibetan or Chinese translations. The *Sarvastivāda Abhidharma* could be based on works even older than the Pāli canon, but this cannot be verified.

these terms, we see that wisdom developed through practice comes last and is fundamentally different from wisdom gained through either listening or contemplation.

By the time the *Sarvāstivāda* school formed (no later than the fifth century CE⁵¹⁷) and recorded their *Abhidharma* in Sanskrit, the order of the Three *Prajñās* had become established in the form it they are typically presented in today⁵¹⁸ by lineages in all three branches of Buddhism: wisdom derived from listening, contemplating, and practicing. Perhaps more important, however, is that the Three *Prajñās* found a place within a well-defined, systematized five-part path to enlightenment. They were no longer merely mentioned within a list of things, unrelated to other aspects of the Dharma.

The five-part path includes 1) accumulation or prerequisites, 2) preparation, 3) vision, 4) cultivation, and 5) the stage of no further learning.⁵¹⁹ The second stage of the path, *prayoga-mārga*, or preparation, includes the Three *Prajñās*. I base my understanding of the *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma* on two dissertations completed at the University of Hong Kong in recent years, one by Liew Jew Chong and the other by Stephen Suen. The former provides the most detail on the Three *Prajñās*, and the latter corroborates Liew's interpretations and explanations. This is some of the only English-language literature to explore the minor concept of the Three *Prajñās* in detail in relation to the *Sarvāstivāda* canon.

The *Sarvastivada* writing that survives is believed to be younger than the oldest versions of the Pāli *Tripitaka*, however.

⁵¹⁷ See “*Sarvāstivāda*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 780-781.

⁵¹⁸ Although it could have been in this order all along.

⁵¹⁹ Though extinct, the (pre-Mahayana) *Sarvastivada* school's influence is still felt, most keenly in the writings of the Madhyamaka scholar Nagarjuna, whose teachings on emptiness (*śūnyatā*) were most likely a direct refutation of the *Sarvastivada*'s intrinsic dharmas, and in the Yogacara school, who adopted the five-part path in their theory of the *bodhisattva*. See “*Sarvāstivāda*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 780-781.

In his dissertation, “The *Sarvāstivāda* Doctrine of the Path of Spiritual Progress: A Study Based Primarily on the *Abhidharma-Mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*, the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* and Their Chinese and Sanskrit Commentaries,” Liew Jew Chong outlines the path of preparation as the last “worldly” stage before the aspirant enters into the “supramundane” stages of the path. Liew describes how,

through intensive meditation, he will come to progressively obtain three types of understanding: those derived from hearing (*śrutamayī-prajñā*), reflection (*cintāmayī-prajñā*), and cultivation (*bhāvanāmayī-prajñā*) respectively. The perfection of these understandings culminates in the termination of this stage, marked by the direct-comprehension of the four Noble Truths (*satya-abhisamaya*, also called the path of seeing ‘*darśana-mārga*’).⁵²⁰

Liew cites a passage from the *Abhidharma-Mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*⁵²¹ describing the Three *Prajñās* in their ascending order in relation to particular mental and meditative practices:

- *śruta-mayī-prajñā*: the analysis and establishment of the intrinsic and common characteristics of dharma-s, destroying the delusion with regard to existent entities and cognitive objects (*ālambana*)...
- *cintā-mayī-prajñā*: contemplation on the impure, mindfulness of breathing, etc.
- *bhāvanā-mayī-prajñā*: ‘warmed-up,’ ‘summits,’ ‘receptivities’ and the ‘worldly supreme dharma-s.’⁵²²

Liew points out that while developing the first type of wisdom, a student is expected to learn from a teacher and study the sacred texts, though it is nearly impossible to memorize these texts as they are both abstract and numerous. The *Sarvastivada* school recommended mnemonic devices and mental exercises for summarizing key points in the Dharma and making connections between them. At this stage, understanding is characterized as “veiled” knowledge, rather than

⁵²⁰ Liew, “The *Sarvāstivāda* Doctrine of the Path of Spiritual Progress,” 47.

⁵²¹ K L Dhammajoti, *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma*, 3rd Ed. (Hong Kong: Centre of Buddhist Studies, 2007): 87, in Liew, “The *Sarvāstivāda* Doctrine of the Path of Spiritual Progress,” 103-104.

⁵²² Liew, “The *Sarvāstivāda* Doctrine of the Path of Spiritual Progress,” 57-58.

direct comprehension (*abhisamaya*). We see that while meditation is often considered a part of wisdom derived from practicing (“meditation” and “practice” are often used synonymously in western Buddhist circles), some types of meditation and mental exercises actually occur earlier.

Interestingly, both *śamatha* (tranquility) and *vipāśyanā* (insight) meditation are included in the second type of wisdom, not the third⁵²³ (though the Princeton Dictionary places *vipāśyanā* in the third). Liew states clearly, “The first three [*śamatha* and two-part *vipāśyanā*] of the seven stages of the Path of Preparatory Effort pertain to the understanding derived from reflection.”⁵²⁴ Liew provides a useful overview of *śamatha* and *vipāśyanā* meditation, which I will not fully explore here. Suffice it to say that *śamatha* is generally translated as “calm-abiding” meditation and focuses on the breath to develop steady concentration, while *vipāśyanā* is generally translated as “insight” meditation and contemplates different objects, starting with the body, then sensation, thought, and phenomena to understand the nature of things. These two types of meditation are often practiced intermixed, with the meditator going back and forth between them as needed, just as a weightlifter might shift between exercises in a single workout. In the early stages, it is better to cultivate *śamatha* until the mind is stable, clear, and able to focus for longer periods. The texts Liew studied also note that temperament may contribute to a preference for one over the other. Those who mostly practice *śamatha* “delight in solitude and shun noisiness...and constantly dwell in quiet places,” while those who mostly practice *vipāśyanā* “delight in studying and reflecting” on the texts.⁵²⁵

Thus, the wisdom derived from contemplation includes the earliest meditative techniques, while the wisdom derived from practice relies on more advanced meditative techniques. The

⁵²³ Ibid., 59.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., 59.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 62.

basis of the third wisdom is associated with four advanced meditative techniques, known as “warmed-up,” or *uṣmagata*; “summits,” or *mūrdhan*; “receptivities, or *kṣānti*; and “worldly supreme dharmas” or *laukika-agra-dharma*.⁵²⁶ The *Abhidharma-Mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra* contains a sort of FAQ section in which the questions of students and the responses of learned masters were recorded. One such question-and-answer states that the meditative stage of “warmed-up” is not derived from listening or contemplating, but rather from practicing.

Another FAQ passage of the *Abhidharma-Mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*⁵²⁷ relates the Three *Prajñās* to the *jñānas*, or stages of insight:

(Question:) Which mundane knowledges are also known as *jñāna-parijñā*?
 (Answer:) [In the case of] one whose wisdom is derived from listening (*śrutamāyī-prajñā*), [this includes practices] like the contemplation of the unique and common-characteristics of the eighteen *dhātu*-s, etc; [in the case of] one whose wisdom is derived from thinking (*cintamāyī-prajñā*), [this includes practices] like sustaining mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpāna-smṛti*), the [cultivation of] the four foundations of mindfulness, etc; [in the case of] one whose wisdom is derived from cultivation (*bhāvanāmāyī-prajñā*), [this is] like the warmed-up (*uṣmagata*), the summits (*mūrdhan*), receptivity (*kṣānti*), the worldly supreme *dharma* (*laukika-agra-dharma*), etc, and this (ie, the cases of hearing, thinking and cultivation) [together] with *anāsrava-jñāna* are known as *jñāna-parijñā*.⁵²⁸

This passage explains that through listening, one can come to understand the characteristics of the eighteen *dhatus*, which are elements of sensory experience.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 56. Together, *śamatha*, two-part *vipaśyanā*, “warmed up,” “summits,” “receptivities,” and “worldly supreme dharmas,” make up the seven stages of the path of preparation.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 218.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., 177-178.

⁵²⁹ The eye, ear, nose, mouth, skin, and mind that perceive visual forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts that produce the mental representations of vision, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, and thinking. In other words, the sense organ, the object, and the subjective perception, times the six sense bases. For more, see “*dhātu*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 254.

Understanding how human perception functions is the fundamental basis of Buddhist psychology. Through Buddhist psychology, we can better grasp how the mind interprets (and misinterprets) lived experience. Meanwhile, knowledge gained through contemplation is linked directly to the contemplative techniques of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* meditation.

Here, we may need to dispense with a common misconception about these types of meditation, which is that they are about “not thinking” or “stopping thoughts.”⁵³⁰ Rather, meditation at these stages is about training one’s cognition to behave in a certain way. In becoming thoroughly familiar with the patterns of one’s thoughts during these forms of meditation, one learns how to focus and direct their thoughts towards particular objects of contemplation, such as the Four Noble Truths and other teachings of the Dharma, in order to “penetrate” them fully and gain direct insight into their nature. This is accomplished through advanced forms of meditation, including the *jñānas*, which are part of contemporary Buddhist teachings. (I do not recall hearing about the other four types of meditation in modern teachings, though they may be related to some stages of *jñāna*; I am not an expert in these forms of meditation, which are quite complex.)

Liew sums up the *Sarvastivada* treatment by stating:

⁵³⁰ The misconception that meditation is about not thinking or is different from thinking comes about through popular culture and secular repurposing of meditation for stress relief and improved coping skills. In its earliest forms, meditation can indeed provide these benefits. However, this is a little akin to saying the purpose of going to the gym is to get out of the house and see people (rather than becoming healthy and fit). In the long run, if one remains diligent in one’s practice and continues to progress, other experiences begin to arise. Not all of these experiences are relaxing or pleasant, but the Dharma holds that they are ultimately beneficial. After all, the Four Noble Truths are the truths of suffering. Looking squarely at the nature of our own suffering and the suffering of others is generally not an exercise in stress relief. However, cultivating this ability through meditation is integral to the Buddhist chaplain’s ability to provide spiritual care and self-care, as participants of this study have affirmed (see chapter four).

Having cultivated sufficient merit in the Path of Requisites, the practitioner in the Path of Preparatory Effort practices (1). ‘hearing,’ (2). ‘reflecting’ and (3). ‘cultivation,’ attaining understanding (*prajñā*) by means of (a) analyzing and categorizing the true dharma-s, (b) non erroneous contemplation relying on this analysis, and (c) cultivation based on this non-erroneous contemplation respectively. ...The culmination of this process is a qualitative transformation of this *prajñā* to intuitive insight or ‘direct comprehension’ (*abhisamaya*), which marks the point of entry into the Path of Seeing.⁵³¹

We thus see that listening-contemplating-practicing is all for the sake of *prajñā*, or wisdom. This is understanding beyond words and through direct comprehension. This is going to Paris. The paths that follow are about living in Paris and, when possible, guiding others to Paris.

Stephen Suen, having also focused on the *Sarvastivāda Abhidharma* in his dissertation, affirms that the primary purpose of listening-contemplating-practicing, which he translates as “listening, reflection and cultivation (*śruta-cintā-bhāvanā-mayī prajñā*)” [sic], is also the development of pure *prajñā*, or wisdom—that is, *prajñā* with no “outflow,” or that which no longer contributes to the generation of karma that holds a being in *samsara*, the cycle of suffering. Purity can only be reached by passing through impure wisdom; in other words, experiences of ultimate truth must be reached through conventional truth.⁵³² It is not clear if this is causal, as in relative truth is a necessary condition for ultimate truth, or if the relationship is simply temporal, as in, one dwells in relative truth prior to the attainment of ultimate truth. More will be said about the Two Truths below. Suen verifies the understanding of these terms provided by Liew’s dissertation; both works focused on the particular texts in which the wisdom developed by listening, contemplating, and practicing are referenced in the *Sarvastivāda*

⁵³¹ Liew, “The *Sarvāstivāda* Doctrine of the Path of Spiritual Progress,” 295-296.

⁵³² Stephen Suen, “Methods of Spiritual Praxis in the *Sarvāstivāda*: A Study Primarily Based on the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā*,” (PhD diss, University of Hong Kong, 2009), 16.

Abhidharma, which is easily as massive as the Pāli *Tripitaka*, if not more so. The *Sarvastivada Abhidharma* is the last of the ancient texts surveyed in this literature review.

Modern Authors and the Three Prajñās

Many modern authors reference the Three *Prajñās*, though few provide much detail on them. This section summarizes some contemporary portrayals, though it is not meant to be exhaustive. Tibetan teacher Geshe Kelsang Gyatso refers to the Three *Prajñās* as methods for “dispelling ignorance,” which is the basis of “all mistakes, delusions, and incorrect actions.”⁵³³ Jamgon Kongtru Lodro Taye, another Tibetan teacher, refers to it as developing “sublime intelligence.”⁵³⁴ Most other contemporary teachers refer to them in reference to developing wisdom. The contemporary teachers surveyed all used the order of the wisdoms as they appear in the *Sarvastivada Abhidharma*, rather than the earlier Pāli texts—wisdom based on hearing, contemplating, and practicing.

One of the most straightforward and detailed articles on the topic is provided by Tibetan teacher Reginald Ray and published in May 2004 in *Lion’s Roar* magazine (formerly the *Shamabhala Sun*), a popular Buddhist monthly. Ray translates the Three *Prajñās* as wisdom based on “hearing, contemplating, and meditating.” The first wisdom involves the intellectual study of teachings to develop “a precise and detailed knowledge of traditional doctrines.” One “hears” or reads to learn what the tradition has to say on a topic.⁵³⁵ According to Tsongkhapa, an ancient Tibetan teacher, listening sheds light on the path.⁵³⁶ Jamgon Kongtru Lodro Taye, drawing on the work of Vasubandhu, a central Asian monk of the fourth or fifth century CE who

⁵³³ Gyatso, *Understanding the Mind*, 207.

⁵³⁴ Taye, *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Seven and Book Eight, Parts One and Two*, 261.

⁵³⁵ Ray, “How to Study the Dharma,” para 2.

⁵³⁶ Gyatso, *Understanding the Mind*, 207.

wrote extensively on the *Sarvastivada Abhidharma*,⁵³⁷ describes how, when hearing the teachings, one “has only the words” as the object of one’s study,⁵³⁸ suggesting memorization and systematization. Nevertheless, Ray’s characterization is not merely passive; he includes discussing, debating, and academic activities such as exams under the first *prajñā*.⁵³⁹

Bhikkhu Bodhi, an American teacher in the Thai Forest (Theravada) tradition, refers to this as “learning” that provides a basis for wisdom by clarifying the principles into which one develops insight through mental training.⁵⁴⁰ Here, Bodhi is making a point shared by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, a Tibetan teacher, and emphasized by one of my study participants, that not all topics are equal in relation to developing wisdom from listening, contemplating, and practicing. Indeed, when we hear what is unwise, contemplate in ways that are unwise, and practice in ways that are unwise, we develop the very opposite of the goal. Sakyong Mipham provides the following example:

Hearing that our friends are splitting up, we contemplate who did what to who, developing certainty in blame. Hearing that somebody made a lot of money, we develop certainty in jealousy. Our hearing, contemplating, and meditating are haphazard, and the conclusions that we draw often lead us down the road of negativity.⁵⁴¹

This is much more likely if we are attempting to develop wisdom based on listening, contemplating, and practicing entirely on our own.

⁵³⁷ See “Vasubandhu” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 961-962.

⁵³⁸ Taye, *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Seven and Book Eight, Parts One and Two*, 261.

⁵³⁹ Ray, “How to Study the Dharma,” para 2.

⁵⁴⁰ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Dhamma Reflections: Collected Essays of Bhikkhu Bodhi* (Onalaska, WA: Pariyatti Publishing, 2016), 160.

⁵⁴¹ Sakyong Mipham, *Ruling Your World: Ancient Strategies for Modern Life* (New York: Morgan Road Books, 2005), 18.

Likewise, Taye advises that one who wishes to develop wisdom must “mentally distance themselves from inappropriate trains of thought and other distractions.”⁵⁴² For this reason, Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, Reginald Ray, and others advise finding a teacher and a *sangha* to guide one’s practice of listening, contemplating, and practicing. Thus, in The Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care, “stage two: student” plays a critical role in developing one’s ability to provide spiritual care and act as a spiritual friend to those in need, as explored further below.

Modern teachers are clear that wisdom developed from listening precedes that developed from contemplating, although this process may be iterative rather than linear. Ray states, “Once the mastery of the literal teachings has been attained, the practitioner progresses to the second *prajñā*, ‘contemplating.’” I wonder how literally he means this linear progression.

The Buddhist teachings are vast. Even after over a decade of serious study, including two graduate degrees, I could scarcely claim “mastery” over the teachings, although I do consider myself to possess a level of fluency with them. It is for this reason that the *Sarvastivada* recommend various mnemonic devices, mental exercises, and particular topics of focus (i.e., the eighteen *dhatu*s) as helpful in developing wisdom based on listening. Here also, a modern teacher can start a conversation about the nature of pedagogy.

Another common pedagogical tool, Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning, orders various cognitive processes from the starting point of first obtaining information, through intermediate stages such as analysis and application, into the so-called highest forms of cognition, including

⁵⁴² Taye, *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Seven and Book Eight, Parts One and Two*, 261.

synthesis and creation.⁵⁴³ Bloom's Taxonomy has been criticized as being artificially linear.

Experienced teachers point out that students must often apply a skill before they fully understand it or before they can evaluate its implications and limitations, although application comes further along on the taxonomy than understanding or evaluation.⁵⁴⁴

Likewise, we could wonder how one could possibly 'master' all of the teachings prior to contemplating them. Is contemplation not an integral step towards full understanding? I suspect Ray may agree, though the short nature of an article in a magazine for general audiences, including those new to Buddhism, may have precluded this level of nuance. The Pāli texts also implicate a reversed order, or perhaps, when considered together with the *Sarvastivada* texts, we can infer a back-and-forth between the first two *prajñās* in the development of wisdom. Regardless, most modern teachers list wisdom based on contemplating second.

In his article, Ray characterizes contemplation as seeking the meanings of the teachings in one's life and reflecting on how they relate to daily experience. Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Taye refers to two different schools of thought on the second *prajñā*, one of which, the "Particularists," characterizes it as understanding both the words and their meaning, while the other, per Vasubandhu, holds that one cannot simultaneously grasp both the words and the meaning, as the latter is beyond words and concepts. Rather, wisdom based on contemplating

⁵⁴³ Lorin W. Anderson and David R. Krathwohl, *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (New York: Longman, 2001), 27-29.

⁵⁴⁴ Jon Stratton, *Critical Thinking for College Students* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 40.

uses “reasoning to arrive at a definitive conclusion concerning the meaning of what one has heard,” before proceeding on to grasp the meaning itself in the third *prajñā*.⁵⁴⁵

Ray sees this as a progression from abstract concepts to the “felt meaning” of psychologist John Welwood,⁵⁴⁶ from learning individual dance moves to combining them into a ballet. Ray writes, “With the second *prajñā*, we begin to see that terms and ideas that we had at first understood only on a conceptual level hold deep and far-reaching meaning for us.”⁵⁴⁷

In some cases, we already possess deep knowledge of insights conveyed by the Dharma, as the Pāli *Abhidhamma* conveys. Through listening, we often experience recognition and gain a new vocabulary for something we have already observed. This is precisely the beauty of the Dharma—it describes a reality we all experience (or so it claims) and one that we may have been contemplating for quite some time before hearing our first Dharma talk. This is particularly true in the case of suffering, which every living human knows from the day of their birth (if not before).

In other cases, Ray is entirely correct. With less intuitive concepts such as *śūnyatā* (emptiness) or *anātman* (non-self), we must first learn them and then look for them within our own experience. Even with suffering, which we all know, it may take years or decades to fully understand its pervasive subtleties. “Consider the teachings about death,” Ray encourages us:

We read over and over that death is real and that comprehending this is an important inspiration and motivator to practice. Although we are continually exposed to this idea, our understanding tends to remain purely conceptual and we resist really letting it “hit home.” Then some external

⁵⁴⁵ Taye, *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Seven and Book Eight, Parts One and Two*, 261.

⁵⁴⁶ Incidentally, another example of the “psychologization” of American Buddhism documented by David McMahan in his book, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 52.

⁵⁴⁷ Ray, “How to Study the Dharma,” para 5.

circumstance intervenes—someone close to us dies or we ourselves receive a real scare.⁵⁴⁸

This is often the case with our careseekers, many of whom are directly dealing with issues of illness, injury, aging, and death. Although none are ignorant of these realities, many have somehow managed to go much of their lives without giving serious thought to the fact that these things will happen to them or those they hold most dear. They have listened, but they have not contemplated.

Buddhism, according to Ray, does not wait on circumstance to spur contemplation of difficult topics. Rather, one actively encourages contemplation of these painful truths using “various tools and techniques to help us penetrate the superficiality of our own ignorance and resistance.” While we have used the term “contemplation” in a generic sense to this point, as in “reflecting,” “thinking about,” “pondering,” and “observing,” we can also use it in a more technical sense.

Reginald Ray refers to specific contemplations or meditative exercises used within Buddhism to integrate certain spiritual insights, such as teachings on impermanence, death, and nonself, in ways that result in wisdom.⁵⁴⁹ The chaplains in this study directly referenced some of these contemplations. For example, one participant referred to contemplating the “repulsiveness of the body,”⁵⁵⁰ which is designed to reduce clinging to the body and help realize nonself. Ray points out that many of these exercises can be uncomfortable, if not painful, but nevertheless

⁵⁴⁸ In Ray’s description of the wisdom derived from contemplation, I hear affinities with Richard Osmer’s writing about episodes of being “brought up short” that often spur processes of practical theological reflection. Ray, “How to Study the Dharma,” para 7; Osmer, *Introduction to Practical Theology*, 43.

⁵⁴⁹ Ray, “How to Study the Dharma,” para 8.

⁵⁵⁰ Interview 014, August 15, 2017.

beneficial, even necessary for spiritual progress.⁵⁵¹ Many participants meditated on *metta* (loving-kindness)⁵⁵² or *karuna* (compassion)⁵⁵³ on behalf of careseekers, which are also specific contemplations. The second *prajñā* includes contemplation in both senses, as in general reflection and as in specific meditative exercises designed to integrate understanding or cultivate certain skillful beliefs, virtues, attitudes, and habits.

This could create some confusion with the third *prajñā*, which I have translated as “practicing,” but which many Buddhist teachers translate as “meditating.” *Bhāvanāmayīprajñā* is not meditation itself or a particular type of meditation, but rather a wisdom that develops from meditative practices. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso refers to this as the wisdom that “eradicates” ignorance, while the previous two *prajñās* only “weaken” ignorance.⁵⁵⁴ Jamgon Kongtru Lodro Taye describes how, at this stage, one “meditate[s] one-pointedly on the meaning of what one has [previously] contemplated.”⁵⁵⁵

In general, the earlier forms of meditation are considered prerequisites for stabilizing the mind so that more advanced forms of meditation can cultivate this wisdom. Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche considers *śamatha* a prerequisite to stabilize the mind prior to *vipaśyanā*, or insight meditation,⁵⁵⁶ and other advanced practices. One way to distinguish whether or not a meditative

⁵⁵¹ Ray, “How to Study the Dharma,” para 9.

⁵⁵² Interview 005, July 15, 2017; Interview 007, June 29, 2017; Interview 008, July 6, 2017; Interview 014, August 15, 2017.

⁵⁵³ Interview 002, June 22, 2017; Interview 003, June 2, 2017; Interview 005, July 15, 2017; Interview 007, June 29, 2017.

⁵⁵⁴ Gyatso, *Understanding the Mind*, 207.

⁵⁵⁵ Taye, *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Seven and Book Eight, Parts One and Two*, 261.

⁵⁵⁶ Sakyong Mipham, *Running with the Mind of Meditation: Lessons for Training Body and Mind* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2012), 40.

practice belongs to the second or third *prajñā* depends on the aspects of the mind it engages—a dualistic, conventional mind or a nonconceptual, ultimate mind. Sakyong Mipham clarifies:

It [meditation] is essentially the process of educating the mind so that it draws the right conclusions. To do this we use a conceptual framework. In other words, we use our sense of duality – subject and object, here and there, this and that – to investigate the truth about reality by contemplating that truth. By seeing the truth as separate from ourselves, we engender a way to experience it. True reality is beyond concepts, beyond the duality of this and that.

In contemplative meditation, rather than continually placing our mind on the breath, we place it on certain powerful themes, such as generosity. As our mind becomes more familiar with them, those themes begin to make an imprint. This technique works with two principles, that of the word and that of the meaning. For example, we may decide to contemplate the theme of love. The more we place our mind on that word, the more it engenders that feeling.⁵⁵⁷

This is helpful in distinguishing when wisdom based on contemplating becomes wisdom based on practicing. Contemplating during meditation is still in the realm of concepts, words, and languages, while practicing during meditation transcends the realm of concepts, words, language, and dualism to approach direct apprehension of “true reality.”

Thus, the third *prajñā* is not “meditation” (if it were, enlightenment would be much more commonplace), but rather “an experience of unconditioned reality, the ultimate nature of our own awareness that undergirds and holds all relative knowledge and experience,” per Reginald Ray,⁵⁵⁸ that is reached through meditation, during meditation, or as a result of meditation. When this happens, everything with which we previously struggled falls away. True insight results in lasting changes in attitudes and behaviors. The very way we are in the world is altered. However, we need not wait until that moment of insight to change our behavior. Change will be slower and

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., 41.

⁵⁵⁸ Ray, “How to Study the Dharma,” para 10.

more incremental without it, but in the interim, we can still “practice” or act in accord with the more enlightened nature we all possess, but seldom glimpse.

In the traditional understanding of the Three *Prajñās*, the primary thing we practice is meditation itself, just as the Buddha practiced meditation before, during, and after his enlightenment. Ray continues, “The practice of the third *prajñā* is to rest and remain in the meditative state at ever-deeper levels and for increasing periods of time. One lives one’s life ever more fully as an expression of unbounded awareness.” He thus implicitly affirms that the third *prajñā* is not only a matter of meditation. It affects every aspect of one’s life.⁵⁵⁹

Ray concludes his article by saying, “Each of the three prajnas [sic] is necessary to the others; none can be skipped or short-changed.” This is true, as I explore further below, but it does not mean the *prajñās* are simply linear. Rather, they are both cumulative and recursive. Just listening and being able to repeat back what one knows can lead to an intellectual pride devoid of fruits. Contemplating without listening to knowledgeable sources can result in mistaken views, rumination, or going around in circles, especially when trapped in negative thought processes such as greed, hatred, and delusion. Practicing ungrounded by listening or contemplating can often lack a sense of motivation, discipline, or direction. Any one by itself will not result in wisdom. Thus, all three are necessary and generally proceed in order from listening to contemplating to practicing.

Yet, one cannot simply satisfy oneself with listening once, then contemplating once, then practicing once. For example, having read the *Way of the Bodhisattva* by Shantideva at different points in my life, I gain new understanding each time. When I first read it, years ago, I glossed over some of the sections I now find to be the most profound because I had not yet sufficiently

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., para 10.

practiced and did not yet possess the kind of direct experiences that would help me understand them. Reading it again now (and probably again in the future), I am fascinated by the same passages as though they were entirely new and engage in renewed contemplation for their meaning in my life—which further energizes my practice. Thus, I know from my own experience that the Three *Prajñās* are, as Ray asserts, integral to one another. However, I experience them as more recursive than linear.

Likewise, the chaplains in this study continue to read, study, and listen to Dharma talks, while also reflecting on their meanings for themselves and as part of a *sangha* with teachers and peers, while also continuing their meditative practices, both on a daily basis and through more intensive retreats.

Therefore, the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care is further classified into four stages, described below. Briefly, these are self, student, chaplain, and spiritual friend. In the culminating stage, that of spiritual friend, one has developed the wisdom to aid others in listening, contemplating, and practicing through the recursive process of doing it in various contexts.

The Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care

Let me begin by explicating the Framework in a classically Buddhist fashion.

Sutra on Reflection in Spiritual Care

Listen well, noble friends! Thus, I have heard (in the data). There are three types of wisdom that must be developed in learning the Dharma, considering the Dharma, and coming to know the Dharma for oneself. One must develop wisdom by listening, by contemplating, and by practicing. These three tasks to develop three types of wisdom follow a four-fold path.

Regarding wisdom based on listening, first, one listens to the Dharma for one's own edification. Second, having developed interest, one dedicates oneself to listening as a student guided and accompanied by a spiritual

friend in the form of a teacher, mentor, or other learned person. Third, having developed compassion, one listens to learn to be of service to others. Finally, having developed wisdom based on listening, one listens to others to serve them along their own spiritual paths as a spiritual friend.

Regarding wisdom based on contemplating, first, one contemplates what one has heard to make sense of it for oneself. Second, having developed some ideas, one contemplates in companionship and dialogue with others, particularly one's spiritual friends. Third, having refined one's understanding, one contemplates in what way to best serve others in light of their varied circumstances. Finally, having developed wisdom based on contemplating, one aids others in contemplating to make sense of their own circumstances, as a spiritual friend.

Regarding wisdom based on practicing, first, one practices meditation and other spiritual exercises for the sake of one's own awakening. Second, having developed concentration, one practices meditation, chanting, ritual, and other forms under the guidance of a teacher, mentor, or spiritual friend. Third, having developed some attainments, one practices caring for others, having seen one's own awakening is bound up with theirs. Finally, having developed wisdom based on practicing, one accompanies others to better aid them in their liberation, as a spiritual friend. Thus, one has developed wisdom through listening, contemplating, and practicing following a four-fold path.

One proceeds in this manner of developing wisdom based on listening, contemplating, and practicing because one realizes, through the process of listening, contemplating, and practicing that one's own suffering is inextricably bound up with the suffering of others. One realizes that compassion, the will toward freedom from suffering for all beings, is inextricably bound up with wisdom. One realizes that self is other and other is self; self is no different from other and other is not separate from self. One realizes that one cannot proceed on the spiritual path alone, without spiritual friends and that, through proceeding on the spiritual path, one becomes a spiritual friend to many.

When, through developing wisdom by listening, contemplating, and practicing for oneself, these realizations occur, one seeks out a spiritual community and a teacher with whom to develop further wisdom by listening, contemplating, and practicing. When one is surrounded by spiritual friends in the form of a community and teachers, one may then apply oneself towards liberation from suffering for all beings. This may be done in various ways and involve various new skills, which must be learned through listening, contemplating, and practicing. When, through developing wisdom by listening, contemplating, and practicing in service to others, one comes to know that others also listen, contemplate, and

practice, in various ways, toward their own liberation from suffering, one then gains the skill to facilitate and accompany them on this journey as a spiritual friend. This skill improves if one has also had the experience of being accompanied on one's own journey and encouraged to develop wisdom by listening, contemplating, and practicing by a spiritual friend, such as a mentor, teacher, or peer. While one is accompanying others, one continues to develop wisdom by listening, contemplating, and practicing for one's own awakening, as part of a community with a teacher, and to improve one's skill in serving others. One may also continue to be accompanied by spiritual friends who support one's growth towards awakening.

When these practices become widespread, we form a community of spiritual friends, a *sangha*, all mutually concerned with one another's awakening and the liberation from suffering of society at large. *Sangha*, or community, is the third refuge of Buddhist practice and vital for liberation from suffering. When we serve others, and accompany others in these ways, we support the development of a worldwide *sangha* of spiritual friends, regardless of religious affiliation or belief. In this way, the overall suffering of the world is reduced and each individual's access to enlightenment is improved. And the world, with its numerous beings, chaplains, careseekers, teachers, and spiritual friends, rejoiced!⁵⁶⁰

This *sutra*, my own composition, will be explicated in more detail below in reference to data from study participants. Allow me to first summarize the four stages in a more academic manner.

The Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care is comprised of wisdom developed through three tasks: listening, contemplating, and practicing. Each task is enacted at four different stages, each an application of the same principles to a more specific context than the previous. These stages have been abbreviated to self, student, chaplain, and spiritual friend. The first stage, self, is concerned with the chaplain's own spiritual practice as an individual. The second stage, student, places the chaplain's spiritual practice in a relational context with others, particularly teachers, guides, mentors, and spiritual friends. The third stage, chaplain, is

⁵⁶⁰ Composed for this dissertation. Monica Sanford, "Sutra on Reflection in Spiritual Care," October 28, 2017.

concerned with the chaplain's ability to provide spiritual care for others and grow in skill and capacity. The fourth stage, spiritual friend, is concerned with the chaplain's ability to facilitate spiritual or theological reflection for careseekers of various worldviews in various states of distress. Each stage corresponds to a role described by study participants. Various roles predominate at different times of life, but they generally tend to progress in this order. No previous stage is ever fully left behind, though not all participants in this study, who range from chaplain interns in their first unit of CPE to board-certified chaplains, may yet demonstrate later the stages.

Three <i>Prajñās</i> of Reflection in Spiritual Care			
Stages	Listening	Contemplating	Practicing
Self	Listening, reading, studying, learning on one's own	Considering, analyzing, reflecting on one's own; learning <i>śamatha</i> and <i>vipāśyanā</i>	Meditating, including <i>jñāna</i> practice; realization of the Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path
Student	Listening, reading, studying, learning as directed by a teacher or formal course of study	Considering, analyzing, and reflecting through dialogue with others, especially spiritual friends	Communal meditation and practice; Three Refuges (Buddha, Dharma, <i>Sangha</i>)
Chaplain	Actively listening to careseeker(s) and one's own responses while providing spiritual care	Considering, analyzing, reflecting, and learning to provide spiritual care	Practicing spiritual care and self-care; nonself, compassion, and wisdom
Spiritual Friend	Inviting careseeker(s) to share and facilitating the careseeker's ability to "listen" to the sources of their own wisdom	Inquiring to help careseeker consider, analyze, reflect, and learn about their situation	Assessing careseekers and implementing appropriate spiritual care interventions; Spiritual friendship

Movement through this matrix is both from left to right and from top to bottom. The first and second levels may also be reversed or intermingled, as many come to their spiritual or religious practice through others, such as being raised within a religious community. In the case of at least one participant in this study, it was not until deciding to become a chaplain that they

also began serious religious practice in service of that goal, though nominally Buddhist their entire life. In most cases, however, the third stage is a natural outgrowth of progressing through the first two stages, and the fourth stage is a culmination of the previous three.

It is worth noting that while these stages all reference the roles of the chaplain, they can be traversed by anyone. As the data revealed, the families of patients often act as caregivers for their ill, injured, or dying family member. Likewise, the chaplain experiences a role reversal in relation to their own spiritual mentors, teachers, and supervisors, in which the chaplain becomes the careseeker for whom reflection is facilitated by another. The table above describes these levels in relation to the chaplain and the careseeker, but one could easily substitute any two parties. This framework may also be applicable to other forms of Buddhist-inspired care, such as therapy or social work, though the implications would need to be carefully evaluated by professionals in those respective fields.

In the descriptions below, each *prajñā* at each stage is examined three ways: 1) the intention that motivates the participant, 2) the nature of the task undertaken, and 3) the wisdom that develops as a result. When developing wisdom based on listening at the stage of “self,” what is the intention of the participant, what do they do, and what is the outcome? Likewise, with wisdom developed from contemplating and practicing at that stage, and with wisdom based on listening, contemplating, and practicing at the stages of “student,” “chaplain,” and “spiritual friend.” Each stage is also explored via quotations from the data, with some longer passages shared for thick description.

Intention (*cetanā*),⁵⁶¹ or why someone does something, is an important factor in the development of wisdom (or any action, as per the Buddhist theory of *karma*⁵⁶²) and can also be understood in relation to Right Intention, an aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path.⁵⁶³ Intention documents what participants are trying to do and why. Task documents how participants described what they are doing. Fruition documents what wisdom they report developing as a result, either explicitly (because I did X, I realized Y) or implicitly (I did X; later, I realized Y). Fruition attempts to capture the nature of the wisdom developed, in respect to both its conventional (i.e., practical) and ultimate aspects. Intention, task, and fruition define each *prajñā* at each stage.

Stage One: Self

At this stage, the participant's spiritual journey begins with the intention to seek meaning in their life,⁵⁶⁴ sometimes in response to a particular circumstance or event and often for the purpose of alleviating a specific form of suffering; at other times, the participant stumbles across a book or idea that sparks their interest.

The tasks they undertake include listening and reading; consuming articles, books, magazines, podcasts and audio recordings; attending talks and meditation training; or taking classes (though not as a formal course of study). One participant shared a particularly poignant story of finding a book that helped her at a critical point in her life:

I became very, very ill a number of months later, and it was at that time that I began just practicing on my own in Nicaragua...I found a book by Thich Nhat Hanh and, you know, I just started meditating on my own,

⁵⁶¹ See “*cetanā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 173.

⁵⁶² See “*karman*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 420.

⁵⁶³ See “*samyaksaṃkalpa*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 764.

⁵⁶⁴ Recall that “seeking” was an important code explored in chapter three.

listening to Dharma talks, um, from like Gil Fronsdal and other people, you know, like podcasts.⁵⁶⁵

The content of these books, articles, podcasts, and talks can include suffering (*duḥkha*), interbeing, death, grief, pain, illness, anxiety, anger, fear, diversity and race/ethnicity, identity, and how to be “a Buddhist in a Christian-centric environment.”⁵⁶⁶ Reading and listening helped participants “see [reality] for yourself,”⁵⁶⁷ “grapple with questions,”⁵⁶⁸ “transform that grief,”⁵⁶⁹ “alleviate human suffering,”⁵⁷⁰ and “informed me [in a way] relevant to my work.”⁵⁷¹ Participants read books on religious traditions other than Buddhism or books comparing Buddhism with other religious traditions, as well as secular works (e.g., psychology, medicine, etc.).

The fruition of listening at this stage includes Right Intention (the intention to do what is wholesome, beneficial, and skillful) and Right View (to know what is wholesome or not wholesome, beneficial or harmful, skillful or unskillful),⁵⁷² often based in a burgeoning sense of curiosity as to the beneficial effects of various ideas. Wisdom based on listening at this stage gives the participants a vocabulary to start talking about suffering and problems within their lives (though they may yet lack direct comprehension of the full meaning), which is helpful for the next task: contemplating.

⁵⁶⁵ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

⁵⁶⁶ Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

⁵⁶⁷ Interview 001, July 27, 2017.

⁵⁶⁸ Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

⁵⁶⁹ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

⁵⁷⁰ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² See “*samyagdr̥ṣṭi*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 763.

Through contemplating, participants intend to understand what they have heard or read and, more importantly, verify it against their own experiences,⁵⁷³ make sense of their lives, and use this knowledge to bring relief to themselves or others. One participant said, “My problems had to do with my thought processes,”⁵⁷⁴ and pursued Buddhism as a solution.

With this intention, they go about contemplating through four primary tasks: thinking, writing, conversing, and learning meditation. One participant shared how a lifelong journaling practice evolved as they encountered Buddhist teachings:

I’ve had an off and on journaling practice, or journaling was one of the ways I reflect and I, so you know, before I was Buddhist, or spiritual, I guess, or meditating, or reflecting, I was living. And then, let’s say, the age of eighteen, maybe my journaling starts to be more spiritually reflective, you know. That would include looking back at when I was, let’s say, fifteen and in high school. So there were some amount of retrospective considering. I think that, I mean, I’m thinking back to when I was seventeen and eighteen and journaling and thinking about how the world worked and why there was poverty and why there were insiders and outsiders. That was some of the first, kind of like, late-adolescent content of my reflection, I suppose. Maybe that was where existential and strictly spiritual overlap... I might’ve, I think I felt in my early twenties that when I would journal there were these kind of new realizations and important things, and more new learning, and I suppose thus, from, from early to mid-twenties or late twenties I might’ve been discovering [the Dharma], and maybe from late twenties to late thirties now I’m more like digesting things.⁵⁷⁵

Participants also began meditating to cultivate focus, stability, and the clarity of mind necessary for the other tasks. The fruition of contemplating at this stage is characterized as development or self-development, awareness or self-awareness, and mindfulness. In other words, having gained a new vocabulary to understand suffering and various other phenomena, participants now become aware of how those phenomena appear in their lives. Wisdom at this

⁵⁷³ Interview 002, June 22, 2017.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ Interview 001, July 27, 2017.

stage is still largely conceptual, and the participants describe dualistic subject-object relationships between “I/me/mine/my practice” and “the Dharma/Buddhism/the teaching.” Through being able to name and understand their relationships with other forms of phenomena and experience, they start to gain insight into causes and conditions, outcomes and effects that will, in the next stage, transcend names and labels.

Participants begin practicing with the intention of alleviating suffering in their own lives and those of others. They described this as a process of “living more fully” or “coming back into balance.”⁵⁷⁶ Practicing includes meditation, chanting, services, yoga, and integrating the mental skills and viewpoints generated by these activities (e.g., focus, awareness, compassion) into daily life. One participant said, “Practice is everyday life.”⁵⁷⁷

Participants implemented the other two aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path, *śīla*,⁵⁷⁸ or moral behavior, and *samādhi*,⁵⁷⁹ or concentration developed from meditation. *Śīla* is an important foundation for all forms of *prajñā* and also an outcome of *prajñā*, as moral behavior is a hallmark of the wise. While the details of what and how the participants practiced at this stage are few (interview questions focused more on later stages), the fruits of this practice were described as integral to their later work as chaplains, especially in relation to understanding suffering. One participant said:

So, uh, I’ve been meditating in my, nowadays in my own way. It’s kind, um, sometimes casually, like mindfulness, and sometimes, um, *śamatha*, ...the meditation practice has helped me a lot to being [sic] present and especially it’s interesting that the chaplain’s training, based on western Christianity or Judaism, emphasizes a presence. Nonanxious and nonjudgmental presence. Just like, it just like Buddhist practice of

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Interview 004, June 1, 2017.

⁵⁷⁸ See “*śīla*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 821.

⁵⁷⁹ See “*samādhi*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 743.

nonattachment. So, the being mindful helps me a lot as being a chaplain, in sometimes difficult situation...meditation is the core.⁵⁸⁰

The participants developed wisdom into the pervasive and interconnected nature of suffering, including the interrelation of human suffering.

For most (including Asians and Asian-Americans raised with Buddhism), this stage began during the teenage years or adulthood (for some, as late as their fifth decade). For two participants (of the thirteen) who were raised by devout Buddhist families in predominantly Buddhist countries who became students of the Dharma as children, this stage was brief or practically indistinguishable from the second stage. For them, at some point, listening, contemplating, and practicing resulted in formal renunciation⁵⁸¹ to become monastics.

Stage Two: Student

Participants enter stage two with the intention of learning from others, through others, and with others. For those who were raised by a Buddhist family or in a Buddhist culture, this may mean either engaging more deeply with their root tradition or exploring other Buddhist traditions before finding a *sangha* and teacher with whom they feel comfortable. For others, this may mean going directly to graduate school and only later finding a *sangha* and teacher. One participant described how, after years of practicing with a particular *sangha*, they needed more:

I just felt like it wasn't enough. Like going to temple on a Friday night wasn't enough. I felt like it was just socializing for me, so I sought out, so I took some classes to learn about basic Buddhism again. I went to different monasteries to learn about meditation. I felt like it, there wasn't enough depth at the center that I was at. It was more like a young adult, you know like a young adult ministry group, you know? So...I had a lot of deep questions about meaning and purpose and I think that a lot of, uh, the *sutra*, the teachings answer some of my questions.⁵⁸²

⁵⁸⁰ Interview 003, June 2, 2017.

⁵⁸¹ To become a celibate monastic (monk or nun) and be ordained in a particular monastic order.

⁵⁸² Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

Though they may not have yet realized it, participants were seeking spiritual friends to help them on their journey. Tasks performed at this stage include both *sangha*-based and college-based education, either sequentially or simultaneously. Their course of study was directed and progressive. It was aimed toward designated pedagogical goals and included material the student might not otherwise encounter on their own. One participant narrated how they developed wisdom based on listening as a student:

I think it was that first semester in divinity school and I started practicing with a Tibetan lama who was there in Cambridge and kind of immersing myself in the text, in the reading, in the *sutras*. No, you know, I think it was my second, I think it was my second semester at that point. Anyway, it doesn't matter, but...because I was studying with, you know, Janet Gyatso and Charles Hallisey and some really just amazing scholars who are also deep practitioners, and really kind of teaching the Dharma, you know, and that was amazing and it was totally a deep dive into Buddhist study.⁵⁸³

The fruition of listening as a student includes deeper knowledge of the Dharma, as well as wisdom derived from listening and being listened to in relationships with others. This wisdom takes the form of confidence, diligence, and a sense of welcome and identity within the Buddhist communities. One participant described this as being “part of the living tradition” that is “passed down face-to-face.” They continued:

There's really something kind of incredible that can happen in that face-to-face transmission with another human being and that, you know, being very powerful. There's something else that can happen there. The retreat [with my teacher] a couple years ago was on *Prajñāpāramitā* and one thing that he said that was kind of interesting was that *Prajñāpāramitā* is intimacy.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸³ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

⁵⁸⁴ Interview 009, June 28, 2017.

The perfection of wisdom, *prajñāpāramitā*, is intimacy with another human being. This is the wisdom developed from listening to and with others, which is not available merely from reading and listening to podcasts or teachings delivered by a teacher with whom one has no relationship.

The intention of contemplating at this stage is also relational; it is primarily to check one's understanding against the understanding of others to further develop Right View that aligns both with the Dharma and with the nature of one's own experience, including the parts of one's experience that are not self-evident and need the assistance of spiritual friends to be brought to one's attention.

The tasks involved included reflecting, writing, journaling, and sharing on assigned topics with defined groups (e.g., classmates); working in assigned dyads; talking with friends, spouses, and teachers; participating in group meditation and retreats; participating in communal services, chanting, and other practices; participating in "process groups"; and receiving feedback and direction in relation to one's meditation, chanting, or *koan* practice from a teacher.

Topics for contemplation in this stage include fundamental Buddhist topics such as suffering, aging, illness, and death; questions about one's identity, intention, hope, impact, habits, learning, fear, "edges," and other "stuff that I might sift through and work through from [a] Buddhist place";⁵⁸⁵ how to pause, meditate, transition, process emotions, maintain equanimity or peace; how to cultivate awareness, receptivity, openness, maturity, insight, and compassion; how and why a particular lineage or tradition practices in a certain way; how the teachings were systematized, understood, and passed down; the history of a lineage; and also how to relate to other religious traditions, including how to understand their perspectives and how to explain or "translate" Buddhist perspectives to non-Buddhists.

⁵⁸⁵ Interview 001, July 27, 2017.

The fruition of contemplating with others was particularly rich for the participants and many were eager to share them. One participant described an aspect of their graduate studies that involved unstructured peer group discussion:

Well, part of the MDiv training that we went through, the, the training we went through for the Masters of Divinity was a little thing called process group. They've saved my bacon so much, during that whole process, during that, during that, getting that whole degree. That, it's something that, 'til this day I've tried and tried and tried to get my peers [after college] to start working on... In a lot of cases, yes, it was, it was very humbling, and it was very, it was very changing. It changed how I operated and how I looked at things um, because I was able to take in perspectives that I didn't have. You know, because my vision is what it is, I don't get to see what other people see. So, having that perspective, you know, the multiple perspectives that were not mine, allowed me, allowed me insight I otherwise would not be able to obtain.⁵⁸⁶

The critical aspect of developing wisdom based on contemplating in stage two is that it is dialectical. It is based on discussion, debate, and even challenge. The primary results of this dialectical process were: 1) stronger and more articulate understanding, and 2) clearer awareness of one's own biases, patterns, and various subconscious mental and emotional phenomena, as pointed out by others.

At this stage, practicing both deepens and takes on a communal element. The intention at this point is to find a common identity and to establish oneself authentically within something larger than the self. Many tasks help forge a sense of shared identity, including services, chanting, group meditation, volunteer work at temples and centers, and discussion. Retreat practice⁵⁸⁷ was prominent for several participants. More than one participant discussed the power

⁵⁸⁶ Interview 007, June 29, 2017.

⁵⁸⁷ Retreat is the practice of intensive meditation for several hours each day, combined with various forms of meditation instruction, Dharma talks, student-teacher interviews, chanting and ritual, yoga, reading, and community service, while living at a residential retreat center, temple, or monastery.

of vows, including refuge vows⁵⁸⁸ and *bodhisattva* vows.⁵⁸⁹ The vow itself is a form of practice, regularly recited, chanted, or reaffirmed, particularly in a communal setting. Other practices referenced included yoga, tai chi, *koan* practice, and various forms of meditation. At least one participant referred to the practice of communal living as part of an intentional community and others implied it in reference to living in various Buddhist communities on either a short- or long-term basis.

The fruition of wisdom developed from practicing at this stage is twofold. First, it imparts awareness of the lineage and context for practice and place within that lineage. One participant described the relationship between practice and one's spiritual community as that of receiving:

In the Insight meditation practice, it seems that the lineage, I mean the lineage is one of receiving. Not so much receiving the lineage, but receiving your own practice and your own understanding as the lineage. I mean the lineage itself is the practice of self-understanding. So my own experience is intimately tied to practicing and being authorized to teach within that lineage.⁵⁹⁰

Practicing does not occur in a vacuum. Even among eclectic practitioners, each practice exists within particular lineages. In stage one, a participant may be almost unaware of the lineage while starting to practice. In stage two, they are aware of the origins and reasons behind those practices.

⁵⁸⁸ This is a vow to take refuge in the Buddha (as teacher), the Dharma (as teaching), and the *sangha* (as community), to turn to these “jewels” for guidance and in times of distress. Many consider this vow to formally make one a Buddhist. For more, see “*triśaraṇa*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 924-925.

⁵⁸⁹ The *bodhisattva* vows to pursue enlightenment for the sake of all beings and to postpone their own entry into *nirvāṇa* (complete liberation from suffering) until all beings have achieved *nirvāṇa*. It is believed that vows carry a type of power to propel the aspirant on a spiritual path. For more, see “*praṇidhāna*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 662.

⁵⁹⁰ Interview 001, July 27, 2017.

Second, the fruition of practicing at this stage deepens one's understanding of Dharmic principles. While insights in stage one focused on the pervasive nature of suffering in their own lives, at this point, participants began to describe insights associated with *prajñā*, including the interconnectedness and interrelation of all beings, including people; the realization of emptiness and dependent co-arising, the Two Truths (discussed further below); an awakened mind, *bodhi*, and *bodhicitta*, the cultivation of virtues such as equanimity and compassion; understanding the deep commitment necessary for ongoing practice; a deeper understanding of suffering and the ways to alleviate suffering individually, relationally, and socially; and deeper understanding of one's own moral and ethical behavior (*śīla*) in relation to others and the world. One participant described the relationship between practicing and virtue:

Well, being a Buddhist and specifically practicing the Buddhist divine abode of equanimity is kind of really key to what I do. It allows me to operate in...which I show compassion to all people, to all beings as equally as I possibly can while, you know, kind of being in this milieu of stuff going back and forth, and people arguing and I can be that, I utilize the, the, equanimity that Buddhism, you know, kind of trumpets. I use that to build bridges between people. That's probably the key way in which I'm utilizing my faith in my practice.⁵⁹¹

At this stage, the wisdom that develops from practicing involves both deeper and more direct insight into many of the basic teachings—insight at a nonconceptual level, a level of ultimate truth beyond words. This imparts confidence in the teachings through direct experience. It becomes an unshakable faith that needs no further explanation or justification, nor does it need to be explained to others.

Stage Three: Chaplain

At stage three, chaplains and chaplain interns listen with the intention of serving others, but perhaps more critically, they listen with the intention of learning how to serve others. This

⁵⁹¹ Interview 007, June 29, 2017.

involves both listening to others and listening to themselves (skills honed in stage two) within the context of spiritual care. Their first task is to listen to the situations and stories of careseekers. Their second task is to listen to themselves, to their reactions and responses while working with careseekers. They also practice listening with multidisciplinary teammates, CPE supervisors, and peers, gaining valuable feedback on their work and listening to their own responses as they receive that feedback.

For example, one participant shared the conceptual mechanisms that allowed them to reflexively listen to others and self at the same moment:

Understanding the five aggregates gave me a method for identifying and being helpful in the face of my coworker's intense and fluctuating thoughts, feelings and sensations. This model of self-experience is also helpful in tracking and attending to my *own* constellation [sic] of experiences in caregiving encounters. For example, I noticed that after talking to my coworker at length, I started to feel sleepy and have physical sensations of heaviness in my chest, which then limited my energy for patient care. This awareness prompted me to set boundaries regarding the duration of time spent with my coworker, and also helped me attend to my own grief surfaced by our conversations.⁵⁹²

In instances such as these, it may be difficult to distinguish between listening and contemplating. One participant referred to a method from meditation that may be helpful in this regard. When listening inwardly, they simply listen and “note” what is happening, without getting caught up in analyzing why it is happening. “Noting” or labeling fleeting thoughts and feelings is a common technique in *śamatha* and *vipasyana* that several chaplains deployed. One chaplain described it as:

It's called basic attendance for keeping a, um, keeping a consistent attention on the person in a non-judgmental and like loving way...you know, staying present...watching my mind. That's a, might have to suspend somethings, I don't know. I might have like an internal monologue going on, like, "Oh, I remember I have to go here and I have to go do this thing. Talk to this person and remember to hand this thing in."

⁵⁹² Reflection 010, July 31, 2017.

Meanwhile, this person's talking, so you're learning to just like notice that and just kinda suspend it, being able to come back to it. Make the mental note.⁵⁹³

This is but one ability employed during listening with careseekers that is based on a skill honed through meditation.

The fruition of wisdom developed by listening includes “ministry of presence.” Chaplains repeatedly described the qualities of presence necessary to listen to careseekers well, including to “see things as they are,”⁵⁹⁴ being “comfortable being silent with someone,”⁵⁹⁵ “be aware of my emotions,”⁵⁹⁶ “notic[ing] what’s there,”⁵⁹⁷ having unconditional positive regard, and being nonjudgmental, loving, compassionate, and without agenda were all repeatedly mentioned (and explored in chapter four). They cultivated their ability to listen through all manner of suffering and to remain present, grounded, and emotionally, mentally, and physically healthy without getting “hooked” or caught up in the careseeker’s distress or their own analysis. Wisdom that comes from listening at this stage involves active (even joyful) engagement with the work, while also being nonattached to the outcome.

The intention of contemplating at stage three is to learn from past experiences how to become a better chaplain and accompany careseekers as a spiritual friend. This intention is twofold. First, chaplains intend to seriously reflect on their work in order to provide better spiritual care to those in need. Second, chaplains intend to integrate their work as spiritual caregivers with their own path to awakening.

When asked if anything about the work surprised them, one participant shared:

⁵⁹³ Interview 009, June 28, 2017.

⁵⁹⁴ Interview 003, June 2, 2017.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ Interview 004, June 1, 2017.

⁵⁹⁷ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

Participant 010: Um, actually the emphasis on one's own awakening. That's been the most like, "Oh, right! Shit, that's important!" [laughs]

Researcher: [laughs]

Participant 010: ...so much of the work is like, "How do I offer myself? How do I be responsible? How do I develop this skill set? How do...transformation into a certain kind of person that can do certain things or sustain certain kinds of care?" Um, but really getting to a place where I was so depleted and felt like I could have all of the community's support and training and mentorship and self-care in the world, and I'm still a confused being, and I'm still flawed, and I still make mistakes, because I don't even know what the right thing to do is. And it's just like coming up again and again against my own suffering, and realizing that that really is, like, you know, the tradition says that all the time, like, you know, "How do I become enlightened first to then be of service?"... Yeah, that sneaks up on me over and over. Oh, yes. I really, I really do need to attend to my own, my own sanity. That's so foundational.⁵⁹⁸

Tasks for developing wisdom through contemplation at stage three include formal exercises as part of CPE training, including writing weekly essays, reflections, verbatims, assessments, and other assignments; sharing with peers and supervisors and receiving feedback; and sharing thoughts and concerns via IPR.

Chaplains contemplated various questions, such as "How did that go?...What did I say to a patient and why did I say it?...What's my sense of their spirituality and spiritual state? And why is that my sense? What are my biases, potentially?"⁵⁹⁹ "Why is this so important to you?"⁶⁰⁰ "Could it [the encounter] have been better?...If what I'm doing is not useful, why am I doing it? Am I doing the right thing here? I think I am, am I really though?"⁶⁰¹ "Like how much am I paying attention? How much anxiety am I bringing to the room, or distraction, or whatever?...Like, what is the quality of my presence?"⁶⁰² "How much is my mind being

⁵⁹⁸ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

⁵⁹⁹ Interview 001, July 27, 2017.

⁶⁰⁰ Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

⁶⁰¹ Interview 007, June 29, 2017.

⁶⁰² Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

discursive about it? How much is my mind being like triggered? Am I triggered by something?”⁶⁰³ “What is it that they're holding that's so important?...What is it that they can't integrate or bear to encounter?...Why can't I help them?...How do I offer myself? How do I be responsible? How do I develop this skill set?”⁶⁰⁴

Sometimes questions were imposed by others in ways the Buddhist chaplains in this study did not appreciate. For example, one chaplain reported:

There was such a structure, institutional structure I felt pressuring me to think about my spiritual life in relationship to my work in a particular way. Like the pressure was, “What is your definition of God and how does this impact your human relationships?” Um, and so I was constantly like, “How does that translate to what I'm doing, or thinking, or how I'm engaging with the work.” Like the, there was just incredible attention around that, how to translate my assigned reflection with my actual reflections. Um, so I think that's given me a lot of insecurity, maybe, at the beginning of my career.⁶⁰⁵

In the case of this chaplain, they reported repeated pressure from both their supervisor and cohort to focus on God and away from concepts more spiritually meaningful to the chaplain, delaying their own spiritual formation (which the chaplain experienced once freed from the structure of that particular CPE program). For the most part, however, this process of questioning was beneficial, especially when chaplains were empowered to explore questions important to their professional and spiritual needs.

Fruition in contemplating one's work as a chaplain includes many insights into motivation, identity, authenticity, confidence, self and ego, and selflessness; peace, balance, compassion, empathy, equanimity, love, joy, calmness, clarity, and spiritual strength; a relationship with mystery and the unknown, not-knowing, open-mindedness and

⁶⁰³ Interview 009, June 28, 2017.

⁶⁰⁴ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

openheartedness, ideas about God/gods, miracles, faith, devotion, surrender, and other interreligious concepts; the Two Truths, emptiness, interdependence, dependent co-arising, impermanence, change, and other Buddhist concepts; aging, illness, injury, death, grief, struggle, suffering, and trauma; transference and countertransference, addiction, abuse, mental illness, and other psychological factors; family, institutional, and social dynamics; racism, sexism, and other forms of bias and discrimination; and ministry of presence—how to be with others who are suffering; how to suffer alongside them; how to accompany, guide, and support; how to be with one's own suffering while with others; and how to cope with one's own suffering and the suffering of others in order to be of service to them. These insights into how to “accompany” were some of the most valuable and poignant of all those related during interviews and in reflections.

One chaplain reported:

During this encounter, I was mindful, particularly when hearing about how Elena was abused by Derek, that I can't fix family dynamics that go back generations, but I can be here with compassion. I am part of causes and conditions, but I don't have control over a complex situation. This allows me to be less enmeshed in the situation and more spacious, which ultimately does more good than the anxiety that accompanies feeling one has to “fix” or “rescue” each careseeker.⁶⁰⁶

In contemplating this situation, the chaplain reached a mental and emotional accommodation that enabled them to accompany the careseeker, recognize the causes and conditions of the situation, and not over-identify with or become overinvested in changing a situation beyond their control.

As one chaplain put it, this wisdom is “The importance of not knowing what will happen, not fearing change and [sic] learning to remain open to the unexpected, bringing oneself to the moment, assessing and responding anew to circumstances as they actually arise.”⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁶ Reflection 008, July 24, 2017.

⁶⁰⁷ Reflection 010, July 31, 2017.

The intentions of practicing at stage three derive from compassion, loving-kindness, goodwill, acceptance, and a willingness to connect, even with nonresponsive patients. This is a direct application of Right Intention through the cultivation of many Buddhist virtues or “perfections” (*pāramitā*),⁶⁰⁸ such as generosity, morality, patience, effort, concentration, wisdom, skillful means, vows, renunciation, honesty, determination, loving-kindness, and equanimity.⁶⁰⁹

Tasks involved in wisdom developed from practicing at stage three including basic skills such as introducing oneself, saying prayers with and for careseekers, reading and writing charts, consulting with multidisciplinary team members, leading brief meditations, chanting, etc. Most importantly, however, being present was the primary practice of chaplains and chaplain interns, described as “diving in,”⁶¹⁰ awareness, “being openhearted,”⁶¹¹ staying calm during “quick and chaotic”⁶¹² situations in emergency departments and intensive care units, being mindful of difference, listening (as a practice) to peoples’ stories, and being genuinely interested in them.

Being present also includes a quality of being fully engaged while being nonattached, nonjudgmental, having no agenda, or accepting the careseekers and the situation as they are. One participant quoted Joan Halifax’s statement, “Strong back, soft front,”⁶¹³ to describe this

⁶⁰⁸ The *pāramitās* involve both an intentional component and an action component (see the tasks described below). The intentional component is critical during the “training” phase of an aspiring *bodhisattva* or *arhant*’s spiritual development. While one cannot always accurately predict or control the outcomes of one’s actions, one can purify one’s intentions and learn from each failure. Purity of intention provides motivation to try again. For more, see “*pāramitā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 624.

⁶⁰⁹ These perfections were most prominent within the data. For a more complete list, see “*pāramitā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 624.

⁶¹⁰ Interview 002, June 22, 2017.

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² Ibid.

⁶¹³ Interview 003, June 2, 2017.

approach. Several chaplains acknowledged times when they were unable to be present or when even being present failed to benefit the careseeker.

A third type of task involves self-care, which includes one's own meditation practice; compassion and loving-kindness for oneself; chanting and religious services; reaching out for appropriate support and talking about difficult cases with team members, supervisors, and peers; setting healthy boundaries; processing one's own emotions, especially negative emotions, around careseeker visits; practicing gratitude and appreciation; going on periodic retreat; and, when needed, therapy or counseling.

The fruition of wisdom based on practicing at stage three includes a sense of confidence and sufficiency in one's identity as a Buddhist chaplain. This usually manifested in a sense of connection with careseekers, including a "connection across difference."⁶¹⁴ Building a sense of connection is the first step toward accompanying others as a spiritual friend.

Chaplains also acquired pragmatic wisdom for dealing with careseekers, teammates, and themselves, such as how to recognize and respond to various situations, including trauma, dying, death, grief, and bereavement; preparing for, a family's anxiety during, and recovering from surgery; domestic abuse and family conflict; addiction and recovery; mental health issues, including personality disorders, psychosis, and suicidality; and loss of agency, transitions, aging, and other significant life changes. While it is the sense of connection that provides meaning and motivation for chaplains to continue their work, this pragmatic wisdom developed from the practice of spiritual care also gives them confidence that they can do the work and will continue to improve over time.

⁶¹⁴ Interview 001, July 27, 2017.

Stage Four: Spiritual Friend

The intention of listening to develop wisdom in stage four is more altruistic than in stage three. The chaplain listens to the other for the sake of the other and, in doing so, enables the careseeker to “listen” to the sources of their own spiritual, religious, existential, and philosophical wisdom. The tasks involved in listening in stage four are very similar to those involved in stage three, including listening to both the careseeker and oneself, but the balance has shifted to the careseeker. Awareness of one’s responses is still there, but one’s sense of self fades into the background or, in some instances, disappears altogether into a selfless awareness.

Participants often found the simple term “listening” inadequate, even when adjectives like “deep” or “supportive” were added. Some described this task as “holding their suffering,”⁶¹⁵ a “human connection... That stems beyond words... that breaks down all the labels,”⁶¹⁶ “being with patients who are critically ill and dying and not flinching,”⁶¹⁷ and “safe and compassionate accompaniment.”⁶¹⁸

The fruition of wisdom developed from listening at this stage is twofold. First and most importantly, the careseeker feels truly heard and witnessed in a profound way. They gain access to their own wisdom in a way that empowers and strengthens them. Through being listened to, careseekers experience catharsis, clarity, and a sense of value or worth that is affirmed by the chaplain’s unconditional positive regard. Second, the chaplain experiences a sense of the sacred through the act of witnessing. One participant “learn[ed] how to be comfortable with other forms of the sacred moving through [me]” than those described in Buddhism.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁵ Interview 005, July 15, 2017.

⁶¹⁶ Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

⁶¹⁷ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

⁶¹⁸ Reflection 001, August 12, 2017.

⁶¹⁹ Interview 005, July 15, 2017.

The intention of contemplating as the basis for wisdom in stage four is likewise other-directed. While the chaplain will also contemplate, they primarily intend to facilitate contemplation for the careseeker. The intention is to make time and space for that contemplation to take place (but not necessarily be the one doing it), especially amid the hustle and bustle of a medical situation or daily life. The tasks associated with helping careseekers contemplate their situations are largely conversational. In addition to being present and listening, they include an ability to tactfully inquire and learn more, empathize with and understand the careseeker's situation, gently challenge and question a careseeker's perspective or understanding, help them interpret or reinterpret their own religious or spiritual tradition, suggest alternatives, support the careseeker's needs and goals, pray with careseekers, and, sometimes, help diffuse conflict between family members or family and medical staff in order to clarify issues or decisions.

One participant related a story of accompanying a family that prayed for a miracle at the death of their mother:

They tried everything else, and you know, very large family and very devout evangelical Christians, and "We're just praying for a miracle. She's gonna get through this," and we were the ones to sit down with the whole family and all of the kids and go over the medical situation and review the ethics of like what, you know, who is your mom? And we ask those questions, you know...and also we present options, too, so we, we walk that fine line...after a family meeting...the youngest daughter in that family was the most like, "No, we're praying for a miracle. My pastor's been here. I'm so glad you're here, chaplains. Can you pray for a miracle too?"...I just planted a seed, kinda very gently, kind of offered, like, "Well, you know, sometimes the miracles we want, you know, we want Mom to get better. We want her to stay here with us, um, and sometimes the miracle is, you know, Mom being with God. You know, maybe that is part of, it's also like a miracle." And I found this, planted that seed...in her traditions, and I like had talked to her for a long time...she started crying, but the next day was able to come back, actually come back to the hospital and agree with the other siblings, like "We have to let Mom go," and was there at the bedside praying with her mom... "This miracle is, you know, God, we respect this miracle of her being with you, and she's lived a good

life and we give her to you.” You know, and was able to kind of make the journey a little bit.⁶²⁰

This chaplain presents a clear example of several of the tasks involved in accompanying a careseeker as a spiritual friend, while respecting the careseeker’s religious tradition and aiding in spiritual growth.

The fruition of wisdom developed through contemplating also relates to both the chaplain and careseeker. To the chaplain, it improves their understanding of the wide variety of human situations and responses to suffering. More importantly, however, it offers the careseeker the ability to think through their situation and change their perspective or behavior. Participants reported numerous incidents in which careseekers were able to develop a sense of empowerment or determination, recognize a painful truth, accept or let go of a situation they could not change, make an important decision, achieve a sense of clarity or calm, find a new meaning, deepen their relationship to God, repent or seek forgiveness, become aware of and begin to process their emotions, and seek, find, or offer family support.

The intention of practicing spiritual friendship is inseparable from an intention toward awakening, both for oneself and for others. Three different participants spoke directly about the practice of spiritual friendship.⁶²¹ The practice of spiritual friendship is characterized as the whole of the spiritual path because it is the practice whereby one transcends one’s preoccupation with self to pursue liberation from suffering for all beings.⁶²² At this stage, the chaplain treats each person’s awakening as equally important, seeing all suffering as equally in need of

⁶²⁰ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

⁶²¹ Interview 014, August 15, 2017; Reflection 010, July 31, 2017; and Follow-Up Interview 005, October 11, 2017.

⁶²² This is a classically Mahayana characterization. While Theravada Buddhism may not characterize it quite this way, they too seek to realize *anatta*, or nonself, on the path to awakening.

liberation, whether it is one's own or another's (i.e., seeing no distinction between them).

Participants reported that the intention of equanimity eliminates the conceptual barriers between self and other, enabling them to be less protective of what they are conditioned to view as the "self" and therefore more present for others.

The tasks associated with practicing spiritual friendship include an ability to accurately assess the careseeker's spiritual situation and intervene appropriately to diminish suffering. In this process, the chaplain must often demonstrate "code-switching" and translation. For example, in assessing a careseeker's needs, the chaplain may see their situation through the lens of the Three Poisons—greed, hatred, and delusion—but then offer an appropriate intervention from the careseeker's own tradition, such as addressing an alienating conception of God (aversion combined with delusion) by discussing Jesus's love and forgiveness.

Appropriate interventions were as varied as careseekers and their situations, but were based in common values, documented under the code group for positive emotions and values, and common outcomes, the most frequent of which was alleviating suffering, both short- and long-term. The fruition of wisdom derived from practicing as a spiritual friend includes most of the positive values and emotions coded in the data, such as acceptance, accompaniment, awe, compassion, devotion, dignity, emotional awareness, empathy, equanimity, generosity, gratitude, happiness, humility, love, mindfulness, peace/calm/ease, and relief from suffering for both the careseeker and chaplain. Through accompanying careseekers as a spiritual friend, chaplains both experience a sense of selflessness themselves and also observe the nonself nature of the careseekers they accompany. One chaplain wrote in their reflection:

[The careseeker's] experience of identity shift and health loss bring up the central Buddhist concepts of impermanence and non-self. This woman was once healthy and out in the world. Now she lies in a hospital bed with a medical bracelet around her wrist. She still has the same job title, and

can even do some of this work from her laptop in the hospital, and yet it feels “weird” and “different to be a patient,” “like, this isn’t me.” She was aware of change happening in her life, which can loosen one’s sense of who exactly “me” is.⁶²³

Nonself and related concepts, including emptiness, impermanence, and interdependence, were referenced by almost all chaplains at some point in their interviews or reflections. The chaplains in this study find deep correlations between their work as spiritual caregivers and these foundational Dharmic principles. Direct, nonconceptual insight beyond words into these principles is the very nature of *prajñā* and the ultimate outcome on these chaplains’ spiritual paths.

Validating the Framework

The Framework was validated 1) against the Dharma, 2) within the data itself through theoretical coding, and 3) via participant review in follow-up interviews. First, I will consider the Framework in relation to the constellation of concepts related to the Buddhist term *prajñā*, particularly the idea of the Two Truths. The Framework aligns with these concepts and describes the application of a Dharmic principle in a particular context. Second, I examine the data itself to determine if it is sufficient to describe the theoretical categories that constitute the Framework. In this case, I judge that the data is sufficient to state that the categories exist, although all categories did not achieve data “saturation,” that is, enough data to fully describe the characteristics of each theoretical category. Third, I shared an early draft of the Framework and thesis with two participants during follow-up interviews, and they affirmed its merit.

⁶²³ Reflection 001, August 12, 2017.

Validation via Dharma

To determine if the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care is aligned with the Dharma, I must say more about *prajñā* itself. The literature review above covered the Three *Prajñās* and briefly alluded to the nature of *prajñā*, naming and noting some of its qualities without elaborating them. Participants also listed many of those qualities in their interviews and reflections. Now, I must contextualize the Three *Prajñās* and the Framework within a broader constellation of concepts that make up the expansive Buddhist literature on *prajñā*, or wisdom. It is important to note that my viewpoint is primarily Mahayana. As such, there is some overlap with Theravada teachings on *paññā* (Pāli for “wisdom”), but also significant development on the topic of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and the role of the *bodhisattva* path that are unique to Mahayana. In general, the Mahayana teachings are included within the Vajrayana, though they may be expanded on or reinterpreted according to uniquely Vajrayana practices.

The concepts treated below include impermanence (*anitya*), interdependence (*pratītyasamutpāda*), nonself (*anātman*), emptiness (*śūnyatā*), and the Two Truths (*satyadvaya*). Emptiness is a Mahayana concept that includes the characteristics of impermanence, interdependence, and nonself. Briefly, “Emptiness is the lack or absence of intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) in any and all phenomena, the final nature of all things (*dharmatā*), and the ultimate truth (*paramārthasatya*).”⁶²⁴ Meaning, because all phenomena are impermanent and interdependent (not independent), they are “empty” of intrinsic nature; this includes the “self,” which is nonself.

⁶²⁴ See “*śūnyatā*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 871-872.

In summation, all the previous concepts describe the ultimate truth (*paramārthasatya*) that one apprehends directly via mediation. However, they belong to the conventional truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*) because they are only words on paper. The ultimate truth to which the words point is itself beyond words—is nonconceptual—and can only be known through direct experience. The soteriological purpose of the Three *Prajñās* in the Buddhist literature is to attain ultimate truth via *bhāvanāmayīprajñā*, or the wisdom derived from practicing. However, one passes through conventional truth during *śrutamayīprajñā*, the wisdom derived from listening, and *cintāmayīprajñā*, the wisdom derived from contemplating. All Buddhist concepts can be understood with reference to these Two Truths, the ultimate and the conventional.

The Framework of listening, contemplating, and practicing is also a conventional truth, including its relation to practical wisdom derived from practicing spiritual care. Yet, while practicing in the later stages, it can also lead to apprehension of the ultimate truth, as spiritual friendship aids the chaplain in transcending the self. Wisdom (*prajñā*) itself can also be understood via conventional and ultimate truths.

Wisdom is a multivalent term for acquiring the insights or truths named above. Buddhist doctrine, perhaps unique among religions, makes a distinction between conventional and ultimate truth. One can understand the differences between appearance and reality using the analogy of a mirage. While looking at a mirage in the desert, the statement, “I see water,” would be true, though no water is present. The Two Truths points to the notion that although we can make true statements about our perceptions as the perceiver, our perception of reality is not the same as reality itself.⁶²⁵

⁶²⁵ His Holiness The Dalai Lama, *Flash of Lightning*, 122.

Our perceptions and our minds must be purified through meditation to achieve direct experience of ultimate truth. All forms of language function at the level of conventional truth inasmuch as they are contextual and conditional. Likewise, religious statements also fall into the paradigm of conventional truth. Thus, the Buddhist adage, “Do not mistake the finger [pointing at the moon] for the moon,” advises us to not mistake the written or spoken Dharma for the ultimate truth. Thus, what one hears, reads, and contemplates, being bound up in language, belongs to the realm of conventional truth.

Spiritual experiences, on the other hand, may provide one with a direct apprehension of ultimate truths. *Prajñā* is insight into ultimate truth. When teaching complex concepts, such as *prajñā*, the Buddha would often preface the ultimate with a conventional truth, just as *bhāvanāmayīprajñā* is prefaced with *śruta-* and *cintāmayīprajñā*. For example, before describing *śūnyatā*, or emptiness, a concept difficult to grasp, the Buddha would explore the feeling of the unsatisfactoriness of things, which is easy to relate to one’s own direct experience.⁶²⁶ His Holiness the Dalai Lama (HHDL) states that the ultimate truth “cannot be perceived by the intellect.”⁶²⁷ This is because, as the eighth-century Buddhist teacher Śāntideva points out in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, the intellect itself exists on the level of conventional truth, but humans possess another type of intelligence that can perceive ultimate truth.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁶ In the *Training Anthology*, Śāntideva quotes an earlier Buddhist text called the *Meeting of Father and Son* (*Pitā-putra-samāgama*), which is purportedly a discourse of the Buddha explicating the unsatisfactoriness of existence, as experienced through the “three poisons” of attachment, aversion, and delusion, and their relationship to the cultivation of wisdom of emptiness. See Śāntideva and Goodman, *The Training Anthology of Śāntideva*, 234-244.

⁶²⁷ His Holiness The Dalai Lama, *Flash of Lightning*, 118-119.

⁶²⁸ His Holiness The Dalai Lama, *Flash of Lightning*, 118-119.

The Framework, as a concept, also belongs to conventional truth, but this makes it flexible. Anything that exists conditionally can also change as conditions change. As a concept, it can be repurposed and applied to mundane activities in service of practical goals, such as reducing suffering in oneself and others short of complete liberation.

Ultimate truth, meanwhile, remains unchanging, nondual, and cannot be perceived by a mind that still conceptualizes subject and object.⁶²⁹ Multiple participants in this study referenced this important principle. One participant described what some might call a mystic experience and what Zen Buddhists refer to as a moment of *kenshō*, or momentary knowledge of the true nature of oneself and, by extension, all things.⁶³⁰ The participant reported:

I was thinking of the popular phrase from the *Avatamsaka Sutra*,⁶³¹ “one is all, all is one.” And I was walking in the, in the park, in the woods of the park, in downtown Tokyo, when I was walking to my office. One day, one morning, I suddenly realized that I am here now thanks to the innumerable relationships with other, others beyond time and space. I suddenly felt something warm in my heart and started to cry. I realized that kind of, uh, glimpse, glimpse of reality, my, my encounter with something big. And now I think that phrase is kind of the guiding post for me. And the “one is all” means the wisdom, or emptiness, because in one small grain of sand of the river Ganges, whole universe is there. That’s means [sic], one consists of the inference from all the other. That means, one is perfect, but in one grain, there is nothing eternal, or nothing, kind of inherent to that existence. Nothing is me, but it’s okay. And uh, “all is one,” I’ve been thinking that is not simple, but now I understand that means love and compassion.⁶³²

Other participants referred to similar experiences more in passing, rather than by offering a detailed narration of a direct experience of ultimate truth, however brief. This appeared in the data in relation to the codes “emptiness & interdependence,” “insight,” and “nonconceptual.”

⁶²⁹ Ibid., 120.

⁶³⁰ See “*jianxing*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 385.

⁶³¹ For more, see “*Avatamsakasūtra*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 84.

⁶³² Interview 003, June 2, 2017.

These references were frequently in relation to an interview question about what commonly arises within the chaplain's own reflections.

For example, when I asked, "Do you find there are particular ideas, concepts, terms, or teachings from the Dharma that tend to come up over and over?" one participant responded, "Certainly, and 'emptiness' is the biggest of those. Not, obviously, the nihilistic version, but the notion of phenomena as being compounded, interdependent, conditional, comes up a lot. Um, there's also the ultimate and the worldly, sort of understandings that comes up."⁶³³ Another participant related the nondual view of emptiness directly to a worldview that helps them cope with the impermanence of their own role as a chaplain:

I mean emptiness teachings. I feel like it's so easy to get really deep into this idea of like, "I'm the helper, and I'm helping others," or "Now I feel helpless and I need help." But just the emptiness of and the transitoriness [sic] of these roles. Like how, how to have good professional boundaries and personal boundaries, while also realizing that all of these identities are transitory and empty of an inherent nature. Just holding that.⁶³⁴

Participants also reported difficulty explaining these glimpses of ultimate reality and the concepts Buddhists commonly use to describe this truth, such as emptiness, nonself, etc., to peers and supervisors. One participant related, "I guess the hardest thing for me always is feeling like I wasn't understood necessarily by my peers or where I was coming from. It was this like, 'Okay, well let me now explain, you know, emptiness or...' you know, it's just, that's not easy to do."⁶³⁵

Likewise, non-Buddhist peers and supervisors weren't always able to assist the Buddhist chaplain interns in grappling with big questions related to their own worldview. For example:

I think early on I felt very lonely in having had, I felt, reflect in isolation on significant themes from my religious heritage. Like, what does it mean to uphold my vows in a hospital setting? Or, what does it mean to have a non-dual view of reality in a highly, like, specialized setting, and heavily

⁶³³ Interview 005, July 15, 2017.

⁶³⁴ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

⁶³⁵ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

task-based setting, and to have like an emphasis on process and consciousness in the highly factual setting, in a materialistic setting? Like, all of those sorts of questions were so internal, and I felt, yeah, I felt lonely. Um, holding them and kind of wrestling with them in different encounters.⁶³⁶

These concepts also arose in the chaplains' written reflections, which included two explicit references to the Two Truths and various references coded as "emptiness," "interdependence," "seeing reality," "nonself," "wisdom," and various spiritual or mystic experiences. Under the reflection question, "4. Is there a theme or pattern connecting this issue to other spiritual care experiences?" one participant answered, "Another theme is that of *upāya*, or skillful means. This is tied directly to the acknowledgment of relative and ultimate levels of reality/understanding that is spoken of throughout all of the vehicles of Buddhism I'm aware of."⁶³⁷ The participant then explored the careseeker's Christian worldview as they understood it and concluded by stating, "In my own experience and reading, what looks like emptiness or equanimity from one perspective may well manifest as love or compassion from another (the two wings [wisdom and compassion] teaching and the relative and ultimate teaching)."⁶³⁸ Another participant pointed out in their reflection, "The Dharma is the truth of reality and suffering. It has been expressed through the sutras written by buddhas and ancestors, and it is also intended to be practiced with and realized for oneself,"⁶³⁹ which is exactly what one attempts through the practice of meditation.

Bhāvanāmayīprajñā describes the mind's capacity to move beyond concepts of subject and object through proper training. Absolute truth is sought through a "positive way" of

⁶³⁶ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

⁶³⁷ Reflection 005, August 7, 2017.

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

⁶³⁹ Reflection 008, July 24, 2017.

practicing, but it cannot be achieved through “negation” or “gained by analysis,” though some people may spend many frustrating hours on the latter.⁶⁴⁰ Most descriptions of ultimate truth follow this latter route (using analytical language), but it is important to remember that they are only descriptions, not the truth itself. It is only through the direct practice of meditation that ultimate truth can be seen by the mind and, “Once it has been experienced, it is not necessary to demonstrate it again,” according to HHDL. “Its existence is true, and one does not have to rely on argument to prove that it exists.”⁶⁴¹ But if one seeks emptiness analytically, using words, we cannot find it. “What has been found by experiencing [emptiness] through listening, reflecting, and meditating cannot be found through such analysis.” When one seeks it through analysis, “there is nothing that exists,”⁶⁴² because analysis is based in language, and language itself can only convey conventional truth. This kind of switching back and forth between considering conventional and ultimate truth is common within Buddhist literature and has been demonstrated by the Buddhist chaplains in this study, per their quotes above. Moreover, it may be an area for significant future research among Buddhist chaplains.

As we have seen from the study participants’ quotes above, the nature of the self can be understood within this paradigm of conventional and ultimate truth. Although, conventionally, I can say that “I” exist, that the person “Monica” exists, that a Buddhist chaplain exists, ultimately, this person is just a construction of ever-fluctuating aggregates, causes, and conditions giving rise only to the momentary perception of “I” and not to any fixed identity. The

Bodhisattvacharyāvatāra affirms:

9.10

⁶⁴⁰ His Holiness The Dalai Lama, *Flash of Lightning*, 122.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 122-123.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, 123.

As long as the conditions are assembled,
Illusions, likewise, will persist and manifest.
Why, through simply being more protracted,
Should sentient beings be regarded as more real?⁶⁴³

Verses such as this in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* proclaim all things are empty of inherent existence, including ourselves, to which we cling more fiercely than any other illusion. According to Śāntideva, this is because our perception of “I” is rooted in the vehicle of that perception, our body. The central part of chapter nine of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* analyzes each portion of the body and even the faculties of the mind to find the root of this “I” and comes up empty:

9.59
The flesh and skin are not the “I,”
And neither are the body’s warmth and breath.
The cavities within the frame are not the “I,”
And “I” is not accounted for in sixfold consciousness.⁶⁴⁴

The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* not only refutes the existence of any “I,” it decries this delusion as the source of all suffering. Humans suffer from birth, old age, sickness, and death, which are prominent themes among our participants, especially those working in healthcare settings. Humans also suffer to feed, cloth, house, and safe-keep this body. Worse yet, people suffer for the sake of pride, for the sake of acquiring that which we desire, and from the delusion that satisfaction of our desires will lead to lasting happiness. Freedom from this suffering comes when one experiences the truth of emptiness and through this insight, releases all attachment to the “I,” along with its cravings and desires.⁶⁴⁵ HHDL asks:

⁶⁴³ Śāntideva, *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, trans. Padmakara Translation Group (Boston: Shambala Publications, 2006), 231.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid., 243.

⁶⁴⁵ At this point, it is important to note that even enlightened bodies are still subject to aging, sickness, old age, and death; still need be clothed, housed, fed, etc. In letting go of attachment to the “I,” we simply relinquish any worry about these events, and negative emotions associated with these processes will cease to arise. It is said that the Buddha, old and ill, experienced pain, but no suffering during his death, as relayed in the “Maha-Parinibbana Sutta:

Why do we need to realize emptiness? We do not wish to suffer and we know that the root of suffering is the untamed mind. Because the mind perceives and understands things mistakenly, negative emotions arise and the mind is never at peace.⁶⁴⁶

Because we perceive incorrectly and are deluded, “We should not accept our perceptions just as we experience them... We should ask ourselves what our perceptions are masking. If we do this, an understanding of the two truths will arise in our minds.”⁶⁴⁷ This is the goal of cultivating wisdom both in oneself and, when appropriate, in careseekers who suffer from many of the same causes.

So how does the Buddhist chaplain, a spiritual caregiver, cultivate this wisdom? Through listening, contemplating, and practicing reflection in spiritual care, Buddhist chaplains deepen their insights into the relationship between *prajñā*, *śūnyatā*, and *anatman*. The chaplains in this study affirmed these insights in their interviews and reflections, as referenced above. Let me say a little more about the relationship between these concepts to place the participants’ quotes in context.

Wisdom is insight into the ultimate truth, which is that all phenomena are empty—the term for this is *śūnyatā*. In his book, *Mapping the Bodhicaryāvatāra: Essays on Mahāyāna Ethics*, Pabitrakumar Roy explains, “*Śūnyatā* is an adjectival quality of all *dharma*s [phenomena]—not a substance...rather, it refers to reality as incapable of ultimately being pinned down in concepts.”⁶⁴⁸ Because *śūnyatā* is beyond all concepts, ultimate truth can only ever be

Last Days of the Buddha” (DN 16), trans. Sister Vajira and Francis Story, *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, last modified November 30, 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html>.

⁶⁴⁶ His Holiness The Dalai Lama, *Flash of Lightning*, 122.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid., 123.

⁶⁴⁸ Pabitrakumar Roy, *Mapping the Bodhicaryāvatāra: Essays on Mahāyāna Ethics* (Shimla, India: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2011), xvii.

misconceptualized in language. Yet it remains critically important on the Buddhist path, especially for Buddhist chaplains who wish to practice nonattachment to views, agendas, and “fixing” things. For Buddhist chaplains, this practical wisdom is reinforced by teachings on nonself and emptiness and by one’s direct experience through *bhāvanāmayīprajñā*, or the wisdom derived from practicing spiritual care with careseekers. Roy reminds us, “Lest there should remain traces, subtle and potent, of egoity, talk of emptiness is intended as the antidote. The discourse is a spiritual therapy to help liberate people from constricting viewpoints.”⁶⁴⁹

Moreover, the various Buddhist virtues “become *pāramitās* [perfections] only as and when they are *informed* by *prajñā*,” according to Roy’s understanding of Śāntideva’s classic text.⁶⁵⁰ We have previously seen how the perfections are both intentions and fruitions of practicing at each stage of the Framework. Only when the chaplain has experienced *śūnyatā* do they truly understand the scope and best practice of compassion, because only then do they fully experience the suffering of all beings as their own—or rather, having fully abandoned the concepts of “I” and “other,” can they fully identify “I” *with/as* “other,” seeing no distinction between the two (not seeing them as two at all). This is referenced in the “Sutra on Reflection in Spiritual Care” earlier in this chapter. In fact, seeing neither “I” nor “other,” they see only suffering or not suffering and, with clear insight into suffering’s causes, also gain clear insight into the means for its cessation, no matter where (or in whom) it occurs. Perfect wisdom possessed by the historical Buddha allowed him to lead so many beings to direct experiences of enlightenment and liberation from suffering. Even imperfect wisdom, if it is a fraction of true insight, can aid Buddhist chaplains in easing the suffering of careseekers and themselves.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., xvii.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., xvii-xviii.

The Buddhist chaplains in this study, or at least those of Mahayana traditions, reported that, through listening and contemplating, or *śruta-* and *cintāmayīprajñā*, they realized intellectually that “I” am empty. Yet, as we’ve seen, intellectual understanding is not sufficient, so at this point, they are still walking the path of faith. When they practice exchanging the “I” with the “other” to diminish the ego as part of spiritual care, they engage *bhāvanāmayīprajñā*. These practices can take the form of meditative exercises either done as preparation for or during a caregiving visit, by cultivating altruistic virtues and behavior (the perfections), and directly through their work as a spiritual caregiver. Ultimately, however, Buddhist chaplains realize that the “other” is also empty. Creating a temporary hierarchy of “I” and “other” is *upāya*, skillful means, part of the conventional truth, but not the ultimate truth. Exchanging “I” with “other” benefits the aspiring *bodhisattva* by training the mind to release attachment to the self, which is, by its nature, the strongest source of attachment in one’s life and the deepest root of clinging and, thus, suffering. Alleviating suffering and aspiring for *nirvāṇa* are the ultimate soteriological goals of the chaplain.

However, this exchange of “I” with “other” still reifies a dualistic relationship. The Buddhist chaplains in this study report that their best work is accomplished when the concept of “I” dissolves entirely, when the distinctions between self and other disappear, and when the chaplain can be fully present to the experience of providing care within the moment.

The paradigm of the Two Truths and concepts such as emptiness or nonself may occasionally cause confusion or consternation among non-Buddhist colleagues (as they are often confusing to Buddhists as well). Participants reported such instances of confusion, as when one said:

I guess the hardest thing for me always is feeling like I wasn't understood necessarily by my peers, or where I was coming from. It was this like,

“Okay, well let me now explain, you know, uh, emptiness or-”...that's not easy to do, so, no! But I think for me, personally, reflecting on that was not, um, difficult.⁶⁵¹

Some participants also reported resistance from CPE supervisors and peers to bringing Buddhist concepts into shared reflection. That resistance could take the form of confusion, such as one participant experienced:

Researcher: But when it comes to the CPE experience, when you had to share your reflections with your cohort and your supervisor, what was that like? How did it go?

Participant: Um, for them, just confusing. Like, you know, reflections [from them] like, “It sounds like this is just a paradox.” And I'm like, “Yes, it is. It is a paradox.” I mean, I become enlightened to save all sentient beings. Like, is it that you're trying to become enlightened or are you trying to enlighten other people? Like, that's kind of a paradox, like, and then it was just, “Why are you bringing this up, [chaplain's name], like, there's no way we can answer this in any constructive way for you.” Um, so just sort of like their own confusion, you know?⁶⁵²

Finally, another participant was simply asked by a peer not to talk about their different beliefs:

Participant: I'll just be blunt and say, the last IPR, one of the things that came up with me very strongly, I was having a grief response to one of the things that had come up mid-unit, and uh, one of my peers in IPR said he was concerned about me talking about my theology because he was afraid it would fragment the group.

Researcher: Oh, no.

Participant: And that he didn't want us to be different, to speak about difference, because it might change what is so far been a very cohesive and very cooperative group. And my response to that was I do not want to be silenced, and I already feel I'm on the outer fringes of something. There's a way the other three bond that I don't because our theologies are very different, and so, it's not only depth but it's also, I'm not gonna say quite social, we all get along, but there's a way in which they're in one tribe and I'm very much not in that tribe, and all of us know it.⁶⁵³

⁶⁵¹ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

⁶⁵² Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

⁶⁵³ Interview 005, July 15, 2017.

Overall, the code for “minimized/misunderstood” appeared twelve times, and “confusion” appeared eleven times in the third round of coding, marking significant quotations similar to the above. CPE supervisors and faculty with Buddhist students, but who are not Buddhist themselves, may need to take care to familiarize themselves with these ideas in order to understand their students and guide their spiritual development. Participants often lamented the lack of Dharmic “depth” in their own reflections due to the difficulty of such concepts, the necessity of explaining them in simplistic terms to unfamiliar audiences, and not receiving appropriate challenges to their own internalization and first-person experience of such concepts.

We can see that the data affirms that *prajñā* and its associated constellation of concepts, including emptiness, interdependence, impermanence, nonself, and the Two Truths, are important to the chaplains in this study and are regularly related to their work as spiritual caregivers. These concepts are also complex, and while they do show up in chaplains’ reflections, they are often difficult to explore for both chaplains and their CPE supervisors and peers.

From this review of the literature on *prajñā*, I conclude that the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care is a “Dharmically” appropriate application of an existing concept—the Three *Prajñās*—to a specific situation faced by practicing Buddhist chaplains: providing and reflecting on spiritual care. Moreover, the Framework is not a new invention, but rather a descriptive interpretation of what Buddhist chaplains are already doing, some of them explicitly and others implicitly.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵⁴ While I have described the Framework as descriptive and interpretive, I must acknowledge that it is embedded with normative assumptions and can be read normatively. That is, one could read it as what a Buddhist chaplain “ought” to do or how their spiritual path “should” progress. Using the Framework normatively would be premature, and further validation

Validation via Data

I have already shared numerous rich quotations from the data to illustrate the Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care. While some aspects of the Framework were covered in more detail than others, particularly wisdom derived from listening, contemplating, and practicing in stage three (chaplain), there was sufficient data to confirm the intention, task, and fruition of each *prajñā* at each stage.

I do not believe data saturation was achieved in all theoretical categories. Saturation occurs when all properties of each category are fully described and these properties “account for all patterns in the data,” per Kathy Charmaz.⁶⁵⁵ There is still much we could learn about stages one and two, particularly in relation to wisdom derived from listening and practicing. The properties of these categories were not the focus of my line of questioning in this study, so it is not surprising that their properties are not yet fully documented. In my judgment, these categories were not saturated because the range of variation within each category was not fully defined, even though the relationships between categories were explained. In other words, I know the category exists and how it is related to other categories, but I do not yet have a comprehensive view of each category. It is as though I had found a group of islands and sailed around each, mapping their coastlines and distances from each other, but not yet ventured into all of their interiors. However, sufficient data was collected to verify the existence of the category and provide a general shape. Given that the nature of this study was limited in scope and focused

among a broader audience of Buddhist chaplains and teachers must take place first. Moreover, there is direct evidence in the data that progress through the stages is not universal. For example, in the cases of two participants raised in devout and practicing Buddhist households, stage one (self) and stage two (student) were practically indistinguishable, or stage one was omitted entirely. For more on this topic, see the section “Normative Paradoxes” in chapter six.

⁶⁵⁵ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 213.

on the practice of spiritual care itself, rather than Buddhist spiritual formation, this is an acceptable compromise.

The table below indicates the number of quotations in each theoretical category to demonstrate the sufficiency (if not saturation) of data in each theoretical category.

	Listening	Contemplating	Practicing
Stage 1: Self	32	49*	12
Stage 2: Student	29	49*	37
Stage 3: Chaplain	88*	157*	113*
Stage 4: Spiritual Friend	57*	30	48*

*saturated

As we can see, contemplating at each stage had the most data, and stage three had the most data of any stage. An examination of this data leads me to believe that saturation was achieved in this category. There is significant overlap in the information appearing in different quotations, from different interviews, and in the reflections. The properties of these theoretical categories are very well defined, and the range of variation within categories in stage three and contemplating in other stages is fully defined.

Ultimately, saturation is a judgment call⁶⁵⁶ about how much more there is to learn. Saturation is difficult to prove, though I have attempted to account for the evidence for saturation in Appendix E (this is a time- and page-consuming effort that will not be recounted here). Some researchers have instead substituted the word “sufficiency” to avoid the “imprecision” of saturation and acknowledge that more categories are merely “suggested” by the data,⁶⁵⁷ rather than proven due to the subjective nature of such judgments. While I judge that all theoretical categories are not saturated, I also judge that they are sufficient because they allow for a full

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., 214-215.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., 215.

explanation of relationships and boundaries between categories, although the full properties and variations within some categories may be lacking.

Validation via Participant Review

I shared an early draft of The Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care and thesis (see Appendix F) with two study participants during the follow-up interviews. A total of five follow-up interviews were conducted. The first three only included the hypotheses discussed in chapter four. Responses to these interviews enabled an intuitive leap that resulted in the Framework, which was then presented following the hypotheses in the final two follow-up interviews. Both participants affirmed that the Framework aligned with their experiences and validated it as a useful heuristic. The first participant's response could be characterized as strongly affirmative, with useful and appropriate critique demonstrating strong comprehension. The second participant's response could best be characterized as moderately affirmative, with some mixed statements and limited critique, possibly demonstrating limited comprehension.

The first participant said:

Participant: This is beautiful, Monica. I think it's a real, um, I haven't seen anything this well thought out at all in the literature and it seems dead on to me. I like the way that you reframed to my *cintāmayīprajñā*. I have heard it in terms of analysis and reasoning before. But, as you know, Pāli and Sanskrit have paragraphs worth of meaning put into one word. I'm 100% sure that contemplating fits into that paragraph. Um, I am curious, so I see that you, I see you're linking together the inquiry, invitation, and assessment but then you're also linking together actions, outcomes, and reflection...It's beautiful though. I mean, I'm looking more carefully at the text right now to see if there's anything I can think of that doesn't make sense, that I might challenge.

Researcher: I think the actions and the outcomes categories are not exhaustive. I think as I go through and I validate this in the data I'll find more that fits into those boxes.

Participant: Absolutely. In the assessment process, so I almost feel like you might consider adding under the practicing column in addition to chaplain assesses, chaplain responds. Because, to me, those are actually tightly interrelated and integrated things, but they are slightly different.

Researcher: Yeah. I know in the professional nomenclature assessment is something chaplains do to careseekers. The way the Buddhists that I talk to experience this term, is that assessment is reflexive, at least as much as it's something, I mean, we do it for ourselves. So, I'm assessing what would be a proper response. So even a more Buddhist word, I almost put in discern.

Participant: Discern and there's also, it's active, right? Discernment and response, assessment and response, or you can pick a different word if you prefer. Well, I think one thing that makes me wonder about that is while assessment is very much about (I'm also bringing my background as a coaching and here) I think of assessment as pouring the information through a kind of model, if you will, even if that model is me, you know, sensory-motor-cognitive-emotional matrix. And my actions with that careseeker will change after the assessment and there are plenty of visits in which I don't get a chance to do much of an assessment because it's crisis you know. My assessment is 'it's a crisis,' but I'm showing up. So, I almost see assessment as this dance, this feedback loop of responding but also listening, though in a way one could say that the other two, *paññas* both fit under assessment as well like it's...

Researcher: Like it's not linear. It's recursive.

Participant: It's recursive and it's inclusive. I may or may not get to column three [practicing] in all of our visits. Or it may be a very basic level of questions. So, I don't want to muddy the waters for you but it's just something to consider drawing out in what you say, even if you can't convey it in a graphic and in a simple way.⁶⁵⁸

As one can see from this excerpt, this follow-up interview was both validating and generative, adding additional layers and nuances to the Framework. Furthermore, the participant affirmed the thesis of this work, which is that Buddhist chaplains who have sufficiently traversed the earlier stages are better able to embody the fourth stage and act as a spiritual friend and that this ability is especially enhanced when they themselves have been accompanied, at some point, by spiritual friends of other religious traditions.

The second follow-up interview participant had less feedback to offer in relation to the Framework, saying that it looked, “great,” but, “Yeah, just never thought of it in this way” and

⁶⁵⁸ Follow-up Interview 005, October 11, 2017.

that they needed time to consider it. When it was explained a little further, the participant responded affirmatively:

Researcher: And then the last part is on that last one that when the chaplain is facilitating, this is also better when it can be done intentionally rather than accidentally or intuitively or subconsciously. So, I'm wondering what you think of that thesis?

Participant: Yeah, I would agree, especially, um, the last part. When it's done intentionally rather than accidentally or intuitively, which, which would follow from ...the top part [stages 1 and 2] happens, it improves the bottom part [stages 3 and 4]. Totally.⁶⁵⁹

Later in the interview, the participant elaborated on how they saw the process of employing the Three *Prajñās* as recursive depending on context:

I want to say this process might happen, like inside itself, you know. Like the process might, like, it might have a larger meta-process happening, you know kinda, actually doing the progression here leads you into a smaller form, like a smaller category, I guess, of the larger, metaphysical form, but that same process still continues in that smaller thing, it hasn't necessarily fundamentally changed.⁶⁶⁰

This affirmed a major characteristic of the theory and demonstrated that, after some consideration, the participant could see it operating on various levels.

Of course, it is always possible that both participants were being polite and simply supporting the work of a fellow chaplain and scholar. Charmaz and others have documented the phenomenon of interviewees simply telling researchers what they want to hear, sometimes out of politeness,⁶⁶¹ which should never be discounted, especially when feedback is positive. Overall, however, I find both follow-up interviews to validate the framework and thesis. Both were able to offer enriching critique and express difference or disagreement at other points in the interviews, leading me to believe in the basic reliability of their responses.

⁶⁵⁹ Follow-up Interview 009, October 12, 2017.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁶¹ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 78-81.

Conclusion

The Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care could also rightly be called “The Three *Prajñās* Framework for Spiritual Care,” as it encompasses the practice of spiritual care as well as reflection on that practice. As such, it is a praxis-based theory. One of the major criticisms of the Framework, explored in the next chapter, is that of scope-creep. I set out to study how Buddhist chaplains reflect on their practice as spiritual caregivers. The Framework that developed from the data is arguably broader than just applying to reflection. The central concept, *cintāmayīprajñā*, or wisdom derived from contemplation, clearly includes the practice of reflection. However, it is also broader than just reflection. If we consider reflection to occur after action, that is, based on recollection, then contemplating is broader because it can also include consideration prior to action. The earlier and latter concepts, *śrutamayīprajñā* and *bhāvanāmayīprajñā*, wisdom derived from listening and practicing respectively, provide information and experiences upon which to reflect (and skills with which to reflect, i.e., concentration), but are also even broader than reflection.

It may have been wise to limit this theory to *cintāmayīprajñā* in its retrospective aspect. One could then simply have said ‘theological’ reflection for Buddhists is just *cintāmayīprajñā*, or the wisdom derived from contemplating. Moreover, one could have slotted the role of scripture and tradition, which is important in Christian theological reflection, into the place of *śrutamayīprajñā*, or wisdom derived from listening. This form of Buddhist ‘theological’ reflection would then inform action, which would slot into the space of *bhāvanāmayīprajñā*, or wisdom derived from practicing.

However, I believe this would have created too neat and tidy an analogy that, in the end, fails the test of verisimilitude. First of all, on the Christian side, it falls afoul of various critiques of practical theology as merely an “applied” branch of theology (i.e., applying scripture to life),

rather than a branch of theology that generates new insights from experience (i.e., applying life to scripture). Second, it neglects the Buddhist understanding that wisdom derives from each of these three tasks and that each form of wisdom is distinct and important both on its own and in relation to the other two. Third, I am not even sure comparison by way of analogy is necessary. The Three *Prajñās*, as we have seen, are fully capable of standing on their own within a Buddhist worldview and are already being applied without reference to Christian (or non-Buddhist) concepts in spiritual care. Finally, it is not what Buddhists do. The Buddhist participants in this study did not merely listen to tradition, reflect on its meaning, and then apply any insights they derive from this to spiritual care.⁶⁶² They listened, developed wisdom based on listening, contemplated, developed wisdom based on contemplating, practiced, developed wisdom based on practicing, and then listened again with new insights. Each task includes both the application of particular skills and the apprehension of particular understandings. The emphasis on the development of wisdom in each area makes this Framework uniquely Buddhist. This will be explored further in chapter six.

For now, I retain the name The Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care. This is partially to acknowledge that the data itself is focused on reflection, and thus on contemplation, and to some extent, it neglects the first and third type of wisdom. Data saturation was not achieved in all theoretical categories, and so these categories are not yet fully and accurately explicated. This is a task for further research. However, I maintain my thesis: Buddhist chaplains who have developed sufficient wisdom from listening-contemplating-

⁶⁶² Though it is a gross oversimplification to say this is what all Christian theologians do when practicing theological reflection. In fact, a great deal of ink has been spilt objecting to this method of “applied theology.” I owe an apology for using it here. Although it in no way characterizes Christian theology as a whole, in my experience, it remains a dominant (if sometimes regrettable) paradigm.

practicing as self, student, and chaplain are then better able to accompany others through listening-contemplating-practicing as a spiritual friend. They further benefit from having themselves been accompanied by spiritual friends, especially if some of that experience was interreligious. Chapter six further explores how the Framework relates to various theistic methods of ‘theological’ reflection, as well as some of the major applications, implications, limitations, criticisms, questions, and omissions of this study.

Chapter 6: Conversations, Limitations, Implications, and Applications

This chapter performs three major functions. First, it places this work into conversation with larger bodies of literature, including Christian literature on theological reflection. Second, it critiques the research itself, calling out major contradictions, limitations, omissions, and possible alternative explanations. Third, it explores implications and applications, including some of the more obvious pragmatic lessons and areas for future study. During this process, I draw on Perry Schmidt-Leukel's fractal theory of religious diversity to relate this work to the existing literature.

Schmidt-Leukel's theory that religious traditions' internal diversity tends to mirror diversity across religious traditions⁶⁶³ is an important touchstone when comparing Buddhist and Christian methods. How can a Buddhist method of reflection look a lot like a Christian method and yet still be authentically Buddhist? Schmidt-Leukel's theory explains this through the fractal metaphor. Likewise, how can we call anything a "Buddhist" method, when Buddhism itself is so internally diverse? This is an important critique of my work. I contend only that we must start somewhere in identifying what will doubtless be a wide variety of Buddhist methods. Moreover, how can we understand the sometimes-contradictory descriptions provided by individual participants in this study? Schmidt-Leukel's theory asserts that the diversity of the intrapersonal dimension likewise mirrors the diversity within and between religious traditions, even when paradoxical views/beliefs are held.⁶⁶⁴ Buddhists often embrace paradox, which is perhaps why I enjoy Perry Schmidt-Leukel's writing.

This work interacts with three distinct conversations. The first is the nascent literature on Buddhist spiritual care, which I summarized in chapter two. As publications are limited, I use the authors in *The Arts of Contemplative Care* as my primary conversational partners. Second, I

⁶⁶³ Schmidt-Leukel, *Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Theology*, 8-9.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

place the concept of *kalyāṇamitra*, or spiritual friend, into conversation with Buddhist literature and the larger genre of work on spiritual and pastoral care, mostly from Christian authors. I am critical of spiritual friendship's applicability to the profession of spiritual care. Finally, the literature on theological reflection proves a rich conversation partner. This section will provide a brief comparative analysis. This analysis could continue far longer than it does here; I hope those who receive this work will be willing to engage with me to continue this conversation in future scholarship. These conversations will inform the critique to follow.

This chapter also critiques the process, themes, Framework, and thesis outlined in previous chapters. I point out, as critically as possible, where the final Framework and thesis may legitimately be in error. I only briefly dwell on the drawbacks of qualitative research and grounded theory methods. The largest potential for error is similar to a caution that several of my participants leveled: that of making something out of nothing. In this case, I do not believe I have made something out of nothing, but it is entirely possible that I have made too much of too little. The interview and reflection questions were focused, and the scope of the final theory that emerged is broader than this original focus. Some conceptual categories were not fully saturated. Scope-creep seems to be the largest danger here. The Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care may, in fact, be more than a Framework for Reflection; it may be a Framework for Spiritual Care, but as the questions were focused on the topic of reflection, this is difficult to verify. I may have been better served by keeping my theory and thesis narrow. I may suffer from an architect's ambition (as my previous academic training was in this field) to "make no small plans," as they

have no power to move one's spirit, to paraphrase Daniel Burnham.⁶⁶⁵ Has my ambition to find a Buddhist-based paradigm for spiritual care driven me to make unsupported claims?

This chapter also explores the exciting implications and applications of the Framework and thesis, should they hold true. I set out to describe what is happening and interpret why it is happening. The Three *Prajñās* Framework, however, clearly has normative implications. One interpretation is that this paradigm emerged because the study subjects had already internalized it as a normative good. In other words, they are already doing what they think they ought to be doing, based on how they learned the Dharma. It could also be read the other way: through trial and error, they are doing what appears to work for Buddhist spiritual care in interreligious settings. Thus, this is what future Buddhist chaplains ought to be trained to do, as it has already proven effective. Regardless of which is true, what are some of the pragmatic implications of concluding that future Buddhist chaplains and related professionals should use this Framework? Is its primary utility in facilitating reflection for self and other, assessing spiritual formation in Buddhist chaplains, guiding spiritual care practice, developing wisdom and achieving the soteriological goals of Buddhist practice via chaplaincy, or all of the above? The implications for each will be evaluated.

I have identified six primary areas of application for this research (there may be more), largely subdivided by audience and context. First, this research can be applied in the education of Buddhist chaplains. The Three *Prajñās* were originally an educational paradigm, after all. Second, it can be used during CPE and by CPE supervisors. Both groups (faculty and CPE

⁶⁶⁵ This sentiment may be apocryphal, but it is nevertheless commonly shared among architects and planners. See Patrick T. Reardon, "Burnham Quote: Well, It May Be," *Chicago Tribune*, January 1, 1992, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-01-01/news/9201010041_1_sentences-chicago-architects.

supervisors) assess spiritual formation and help develop wisdom in Buddhist chaplains-to-be. Third, Buddhist chaplains can apply it in relation to personal reflection leading toward awakening. Fourth, Buddhist chaplains can use it to reflect on their spiritual care practice; in other words, to become better chaplains. Fifth, Buddhist chaplains may use it to facilitate reflection with careseekers and thereby meet the standards of professional practice. Finally, the Buddhist population can use it in general within the *sangha*, and Buddhist teachers can use it for facilitating reflection among their *sanghas*.

Conversation

This conversation, like many ‘theological’ conversations, comes in three parts. The first part places this work in the context of the limited Buddhist spiritual care literature. I have intentionally limited my dialogue partners to the authors of *The Arts of Contemplative Care*. It is no surprise that the authors and participants of this study have much in common; the authors are among the first generations of Buddhist chaplains in North America, and the participants are their students, sometimes literally. The second conversation is a critical questioning of the appropriateness of the *kalyāṇamitra*, or spiritual friend, paradigm for spiritual care. This paradigm has both some obvious benefits and clear correlations with the work of the chaplain, but it also presents some discontinuities and dangers. It may not be the best way to characterize stage four of the Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care. Finally, I place the Framework in conversation with other methods of ‘theological’ reflection. Here, I primarily draw on the Christian literature. As we shall see, the Framework has a number of parallels, as the fractal theory of religious pluralism might suggest. It also has some distinct differences, as one would also expect, based on its origins in non-Western worldviews. These three conversations will set

the stage for further criticism and evaluation of the Framework and my thesis regarding the progression of Buddhist chaplains through the various stages.

Buddhist Spiritual Care Literature

The themes raised by the participants in this study, as explored in chapters four and five, are common throughout the literature on Buddhist spiritual care, especially in the chapters of *The Arts of Contemplative Care*. This anthology, more so than the other two books on Buddhist spiritual care, includes detailed information on Buddhist chaplains' practices, thought processes, and meaning-making (i.e., their 'theology,')⁶⁶⁶ whereas the other two books (*Benefit Beings!*⁶⁶⁷ and *A Thousand Hands*)⁶⁶⁸ have a more pragmatic and topical focus. Therefore, my primary conversation partners in this section are the authors from *The Arts of Contemplative Care*. There are many areas of agreement between the participants in this study and the authors in Cheryl Giles and Willa Miller's anthology, as well as one major difference.

First, the Buddhist chaplains in this study affirmed the importance of contemplative practice (i.e., meditation) and its role in their professional lives. For both the authors and participants, meditation cultivates a non-anxious presence for being with suffering, without "fixing" it,⁶⁶⁹ mindfulness and non-attachment,⁶⁷⁰ and practicing appropriate self-care and processing one's own emotions around the suffering one encounters as a chaplain.⁶⁷¹ The authors rely on their meditation training, use meditation as a tool in their spiritual care toolbox, and teach

⁶⁶⁶ Giles and Miller, *The Arts of Contemplative Care*.

⁶⁶⁷ Fisher, *Benefit Beings!*

⁶⁶⁸ Michon and Fisher, *A Thousand Hands*.

⁶⁶⁹ Wakoh Shannon Hickey, "Meditation is Not Enough," in *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, ed. Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 22.

⁶⁷⁰ Chris Berlin, "Widening the Circle: Engaged *Bodhicitta* in Hospital Chaplaincy," in *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, ed. Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 89.

⁶⁷¹ Deleo, "Being a Compassionate Presence," 247.

the importance of meditation to their chaplaincy students. The participants in this study likewise affirmed the importance of deep, ongoing contemplative practice, primarily meditation, but also including chanting, ritual, and other contemplative practices.

Only one chaplain said they did not meditate frequently and that it was not a major part of their Buddhist practices, but, upon further reflection in the interview, did affirm that meditation was beneficial. They described other contemplative practices that also enriched their spiritual care and personal practice, such as chanting, but again, did not make claims to rigorous training. The primary distinction between this approach and Giles and Miller's definition for contemplative care (see chapter two) would be the question of "rigor." Twelve of the thirteen interview subjects reported "care that is informed by rigorous training in a meditative or contemplative tradition."⁶⁷² The outlier would not have met Giles and Miller's definition, but their practice was consistent with the expectations of their own Buddhist tradition, from which they are not the only Buddhist chaplain currently working in North America.

Giles and Miller assert that contemplative care need not be Buddhist (the contributors to their book are overwhelmingly Buddhist, though none from the same tradition as this outlier participant). My research, on the other hand, deliberately focuses on Buddhist chaplains. This outlier may be more common within the overall population of Buddhist chaplains than Giles and Miller's book represents. I believe there is room in the profession for Buddhist chaplains who do not practice rigorous meditation, though they may not be providing what Giles and Miller characterize as "contemplative" care.

It is important to note that this conclusion is self-serving, as I would include myself among the outliers. While my meditation training and practice is integral to my performance as a

⁶⁷² Giles and Miller, *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, xvii.

chaplain, it remains far less rigorous than most of the participants in this study or the authors of *The Arts of Contemplative Care*. It supports my work as a spiritual caregiver, as it did for my fellow “outlier.” Nevertheless, I sound a caution.

Wakoh Shannon Hickey acknowledges the influences of American Evangelicalism and Transcendentalism that have contributed to the emphasis on meditation in American Buddhism, particularly over study and other forms of practice.⁶⁷³ We must not allow the North American obsession with what were previously elite monastic practices, per David McMahan,⁶⁷⁴ to prematurely “gate-keep” what does and does not constitute Buddhist chaplaincy when we have barely scratched the surface of this nascent field. I do not believe Giles, Miller, or any of their collaborators have yet done this, but I must point out that the potential is there.

Second, if “the Buddha was a chaplain,” as Jennifer Block asserts,⁶⁷⁵ then his teaching constitutes a “pastoral theology.” Indeed, participants relied on the Dharma for guidance in their spiritual care practice. Spiritual friendship is likewise described as applicable to spiritual care (though I will explore this claim in more detail below). Koshin Paley Ellison uses the model of spiritual friendship in CPE groups as a supervisor to encourage spiritual maturity and prevent spiritual bypassing. He says, “A good spiritual friend points out to us where we are stuck, hiding, or even abusing.” Good spiritual friends “risk intimacy.”⁶⁷⁶ Daijaku Judith Kinst lists several other Dharma topics useful in spiritual care, topics that overlap with the data, including:

⁶⁷³ Hickey, “Meditation is Not Enough,” 22-26.

⁶⁷⁴ McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 183-187.

⁶⁷⁵ Block, “Toward a Definition of Buddhist Chaplaincy,” 3.

⁶⁷⁶ Koshin Paley Ellison, “The Jeweled Net: What Dogen and the Avatamsaka Sutra Can Offer Us as Spiritual Caregivers,” in *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, ed. Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 100.

suffering, emptiness and interdependence, experience, wisdom and compassion, ethics, vows, and the nature of and practices for awakening. Kinst believes these “Buddhist teachings [are] essential in Buddhist pastoral care education” because they “provide a language and conceptual base”⁶⁷⁷ for talking about spiritual care. By reflecting on these teachings, participants reported being better able to articulate their intentions, behaviors, and outcomes in spiritual care and experienced a greater sense of authenticity and confidence.

Thus, the Three *Prajñās*, as a method of learning these (and other) essential Buddhist teachings, are entirely applicable to the context of spiritual care in the here and now. Essential Buddhist teachings for chaplaincy include *prajñā* more generally, which was important to both authors and participants. Trudi Jinpu Hirsch identifies *prajñā* with insight into the Four Noble Truths.⁶⁷⁸ Mikel Ryuho Monnett defines *prajñā* as “the ability to apply what has been learned in an effective way,” and lists it among the essential skills a chaplain will need, including compassion, skillful means (*upāya*), morality (*śīla*), vows, and a lineage or community to which they belong. However, among all these skills and worldviews, *prajñā* often proved the most difficult to integrate into the CPE context.

Third, the authors and participants both affirmed that many of the traditional hallmarks of wisdom are critical realizations for being able to effectively practice spiritual care. Block affirms, as did the participants, that nonself is the basis for skillful interventions.⁶⁷⁹ Connecting with careseekers affirms nonself, which leads to awakening. Ignorance, on the other hand, reifies

⁶⁷⁷ Kinst, “Cultivating an Appropriate Response,” 10-12.

⁶⁷⁸ Trudi Jinpu Hirsch, “The Four Noble Truths as a Framework for Spiritual Care,” in *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, ed. Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 55-62.

⁶⁷⁹ Block, “Toward a Definition of Buddhist Chaplaincy,” 4.

a false sense of self that is separate from others, undermines connection, and leads to suffering. Through the realization of nonself, chaplains cultivate simultaneous openness and nonattachment.⁶⁸⁰ However, CPE supervisors often struggled with this aspect of Buddhist wisdom and practice due to their own assumptions and worldviews.

Chris Berlin, likewise, points out that selflessness is an “engaged practice” that enables one to connect with others as a key to spiritual care. He describes contemplative practice as being vital to learning to be present with careseekers. However, he also warns that non-Buddhists may be uncomfortable with the idea of nonattachment as a spiritual virtue, perceiving it as “cold and unfeeling.”⁶⁸¹ He sees mindfulness and nonattachment as “allies to compassion, including the self-care we need.”⁶⁸² Participants likewise spoke of openness and mindfulness combined with nonattachment and healthy boundaries to prevent becoming enmeshed in the suffering of others (and their own suffering). This was often not fully understood by peers and supervisors.

Mark Power echoes the experience of several of the participants when he relates some of his own struggles with the nature of emotions in CPE:

There is a tendency in CPE to treat feelings/emotions as having a special power to lead a person to a deeper truth and thus to regard them as gateways to healing the “self.”...Early on, a Buddhist chaplain may feel an inevitable conflict between the Buddhist teaching of no-self [sic] and the theistic teaching of the self and emotions as true and lasting.⁶⁸³

Nevertheless, both Powers and the participants found the CPE experience to be tremendously enriching, even in its more difficult aspects. For the most part, CPE worked very

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid., 3-6.

⁶⁸¹ Berlin, “Widening the Circle,” 88.

⁶⁸² Ibid., 89.

⁶⁸³ Mark Power, “Buddhist Chaplaincy in a Christian Context,” in *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, ed. Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 67-68.

well for Buddhist chaplains-in-training, and its goals and approaches largely align with Buddhist teachings.

Finally, participants and authors both provided examples of practicing ‘theological’ reflection themselves⁶⁸⁴ and facilitating it for others, though neither the authors nor the participants went into detail in describing their methods or processes for doing so. Jennifer Block describes facilitating ‘theological’ reflection as “providing skillful means for someone to perceive” their situation.⁶⁸⁵ She further defines Buddhist spiritual care as including bearing witness, helping careseekers “discover their own truth,” sitting and listening to “stories that have meaning and value,” helping careseekers “face life directly,” trusting that paradox and ambiguity “will emerge into some degree of awakening” for oneself and the careseekers, and “creating opportunities for people to awaken to their True Nature.”⁶⁸⁶ In essence, she describes many of the primary attitudes and behaviors concomitant with the role of the spiritual friend in the Framework described in the prior chapter.

Trudi Jinpu Hirsch, who was only the third Buddhist ever to achieve board certification (in 2000) and the first Buddhist CPE supervisor, uses the Four Noble Truths as a framework for assessing and intervening in spiritual care, with an emphasis on assessment (truths one through three) prior to intervention (truth four). She uses this framework with CPE students to “help them reflect on where and why they become stuck and experience suffering” through a process that

⁶⁸⁴ Chapter two of this dissertation includes a summary and analysis of several chapters in *The Arts of Contemplative Care* in relation to various methods for theological reflection identified by Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Francis Ward in *Theological Reflection: Methods*. Participants also employed similar methods in their own reflections, as will be discussed further in the following sections.

⁶⁸⁵ Block, “Toward a Definition of Buddhist Chaplaincy,” 4.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

involves “taking the student by the hand, yet allowing the student to lead.”⁶⁸⁷ Thus, Hirsch describes the process of accompanying chaplains-in-training as a spiritual friend in order to develop insight into suffering. Hirsch herself is enacting stage four of the Framework, while the chaplain interns she guides are enacting stages two and three. Likewise, Mark Power describes accompanying careseekers on their own terms.⁶⁸⁸ There are various other references to facilitating reflection in the context of spiritual care throughout the data and the book.

However, what these references fail to provide is an integrated, comprehensive framework, which is the major divergence between this work and previous literature on Buddhist spiritual care. Some authors hint at more comprehensive theories based on the Dharma, such as Hirsch’s use of the Four Noble Truths for assessment and intervention. These theories are largely based on a combination of received Dharma and personal experience, which can lead to deep wisdom, yet they lack grounding in empirical evidence and modern modes of analysis. The Framework developed in this dissertation is, in contrast and by design, comprehensive, grounded in the data and the Dharma, thoroughly evaluated for implications and application, and useful as both a heuristic and a guide. These aspects are explored further below. I expect that more theories of this nature will be developed in the next decade as more literature on Buddhist spiritual care is published. In fact, I plead for their development. They are needed now by practicing chaplains, faculty and supervisors working with chaplains-in-training, and students.

Kalyāṇamitra and the Buddhist Chaplain

The suitability of this Framework for spiritual care hinges less on the movement through the Three *Prajñās* during reflection than it does on the paradigm used to describe “stage four: spiritual friendship.” As we shall see below, the Three *Prajñās* follow a pattern similar to those

⁶⁸⁷ Hirsch, “The Four Noble Truths as a Framework for Spiritual Care,” 59-60.

⁶⁸⁸ Power, “Buddhist Chaplaincy in a Christian Context,” 68.

already used by various Christian theologians. The individual attitudes and behaviors (e.g., positive regard, compassion, active listening, reframing, etc.) associated with each at the various stages—but particularly stages three and four—are already well-documented as appropriate to spiritual care. Rather, it is the suitability of the Buddhist paradigm of the spiritual friend, or *kalyāṇamitra*, in Buddhist chaplaincy that I wish to question.⁶⁸⁹ This paradigm has specific implications for the relationship between the chaplain and the careseeker, some positive and some negative. These implications change based on how one understands what a *kalyāṇamitra* is and does. I briefly examined this term in chapter one, but it was not part of the literature review in chapter five, which focused more on the Three *Prajñās*. However, we cannot conclude this research without a careful examination of its applicability to spiritual care.

In the context of chaplaincy, where does the chaplain stand in relation to the careseeker? This question forces an evaluation of the *kalyāṇamitra* model. Its definition is listed in *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, which identifies three types of spiritual friends: “An instructor, a fellow practitioner, and a lay supporter.”⁶⁹⁰ Let us consider each type of spiritual friend in turn, starting with “instructor” or teacher.

Willa Miller points out that “teacher” may not be the best paradigm for spiritual care. Buddhist teachers clearly provide spiritual care to students and *sangha* members, but that is neither the foundation of their training nor their primary role.⁶⁹¹ *Kalyāṇamitra*, or spiritual

⁶⁸⁹ I am indebted to several colleagues and friends who helped me think through these concerns, even raising some I had not myself considered, and pointing me in the direction of appropriate resources. They include Josh Capitanio, Matt Orsborn, Nathan Dōshin Woods, Hyemin Sunim (Bryan Scoville-Pope), Roslyn Karaban, Yusuf Al-Asad, and Allison Draper.

⁶⁹⁰ See “*kalyāṇamitra*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 410.

⁶⁹¹ Miller, “Thus I Have Listened,” 282-283.

friendship, is not generally enacted as equals accompanying one another, but through the hierarchical student-teacher relationship, particularly in Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions. In Buddhism, being someone's teacher connotes a much closer, usually lifelong, and mutually recognized teacher-student relationship. Goodman uses "spiritual teacher" to translate *kalyāṇamitra* in his recent rendering of the *Śikṣā-Samuccaya*⁶⁹² by Śāntideva, an eighth-century Buddhist author who was foundational to both the Mahayana and Vajrayana lineages. This work extols the unquestioning obedience of a student to their teacher. Douglas Osto states, "Because the spiritual guides [*kalyāṇamitra*] are the primary source of enlightenment, their authority is absolute and their instructions are not to be questioned."⁶⁹³ This includes instructions to jump off roofs or throw oneself into fire, as the student Sudhana was instructed to do in the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*.⁶⁹⁴ Some lineages, particularly Tibetan ones, have carried the role of teacher to its furthest extent, in the form of guru devotion.

In a recent article in *Tricycle*, Stephen Batchelor points out problems with guru devotion in a modern context. He believes it is based more on feudal (and thus hierarchical) social values and assumptions that do not mesh well with individualized, democratic western culture. At the very least, this caused his own attempts to practice guru devotion to feel hollow and inauthentic. At worst, it creates opportunities for abuse, such as we have witnessed with Buddhist teachers in

⁶⁹² Bindell's earlier translation of the same text uses "trustworthy friend." Śāntideva, and Cecil Bendall. *Çikṣhāsamuccaya: A Compendium of Buddhistic Teaching*. Osnabrück, W. Germany: Biblio Verlag, 1970.

⁶⁹³ Douglas Osto, "'Proto-Tantric' Elements in the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*," *Journal of Religious History* 33, no. 2 (June 2009): 172.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 172-173.

recent years (Batchelor cites the case of Sogyal Rinpoche, recently accused of sexual abuse of students going on for decades).⁶⁹⁵

Pastoral care literature is well aware of the dangers of abuse of spiritual authority. Some participants in this study expressed hesitation with the idea of assuming spiritual authority in caregiving situations, even when encouraged to do so by their non-Buddhist colleagues and supervisors. We should not, however, read this hesitation in a way that assumes Buddhist chaplains would never be susceptible to using and abusing spiritual authority. If we are to adopt Buddhist models of spiritual care, the at-least somewhat hierarchical model of the teacher-student relationship will inevitably influence our thinking.⁶⁹⁶

An interesting aspect of Stephen Batchelor's article is that he sees the *kalyāṇamitra* model as a corrective to the guru model, at least within Buddhist communities. He writes, "While the concept of the guru was present in the Upanishads that predated the advent of Buddhism, Gotama rejected it in favor of finding a good friend (*kalyanamitta*), whose role was to help you enter the eightfold path and thereby become independent of others in your practice of the dharma."⁶⁹⁷ He believes this model lost ground in favor of the guru model of the later Mahayana and Vajrayana lineages due to the influence of feudal social norms. Whether or not we believe that the role of the spiritual friend is to encourage one toward "independence" (a curiously American value I'm not sure was that prevalent in fifth-century BCE northern India), Batchelor does provide an alternative reading that may suggest a way to move forward.

⁶⁹⁵ Stephen Batchelor, "Why I Quit Guru Yoga," *Tricycle* Winter 2017, <https://tricycle.org/magazine/quit-guru-yoga/>.

⁶⁹⁶ This relationship is not inherently abusive. Indeed, most student-teacher relationships deeply benefit both parties. However, it does tend to create a power-over relationship and opens up the potential for abuse.

⁶⁹⁷ Batchelor, "Why I Quit Guru Yoga," <https://tricycle.org/magazine/quit-guru-yoga/>.

Chaplains in this study perceive careseekers more as fellow practitioners or fellow seekers than as students. This definition is closer to that of “friend” in the colloquial sense, but continues to carry Buddhist overtones. Steve Collins characterizes the *kalyāṇamitra* according to three overlapping connotations: 1) in the most common meaning of friend as one “in which trustworthiness, reciprocity and perhaps a consequent mutual regard” are present; 2) as one who behaves within a Buddhist framework for morality; and 3) in “a specifically Buddhist sense [as] someone who helps another on the Buddhist path.”⁶⁹⁸ However, he points out, “Anthropology suggests that this universal phenomenon need not necessarily involve our modern sense of friendship as two or more persons’ mutual liking and enjoyment of each others’ company,”⁶⁹⁹ though it can. It may also indicate a more reciprocal, professional, or even contractual relationship. We cannot assume that a “friend” in other times and cultures is the same as a “friend” in twenty-first-century North America. Nevertheless, we cannot escape our modern connotation and the potential for boundary violations it evoke. We would expect a level of mutuality from a friend that we would never expect from a careseeker.

As dangerous as these expectations can be, feminist clinical professors of psychiatry and psychology (respectively), Jean Baker Miller and Irene Peirce Stiver point out that some mutuality within the caregiving relationship can be beneficial. They write, “Out of the experience of authentic, mutually empathic interactions, we acquire the ‘feeling-thinking’ understanding of ourselves and others that gives us a sense of a ‘knowledgeable’ basis for action.”⁷⁰⁰ In other words, mutual empathy in which we feel/think what the careseeker

⁶⁹⁸ Steve Collins, “*Kalyāṇamitta and Kalyāṇamittatā*,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XI (1987): 52-53.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 52.

⁷⁰⁰ Jean Baker Miller and Irene Peirce Stiver, *The Healing Connection: How Women Form Relationships in Therapy and in Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 36.

feels/thinks and the careseeker recognizes and acknowledges that mutuality (thus confirming our empathy is correct) serves as the basis for informed interventions. Lacking that mutuality, we are just guessing, or worse, projecting. Mutuality of this nature is built on a process of reciprocally sharing thoughts and feelings—not *equal* sharing, but reciprocal sharing.

Miller and Stiver describe an example involving Ann, Emily, and Beth. Ann shares her thoughts and emotions around Emily's illness, and Beth responds not just to Ann's thoughts/feelings, but with her own thoughts/feelings. Miller and Stiver write:

[Beth] puts the sadness they both feel into words and also expresses some fear in her own face and voice. What is especially growth-promoting is that as they talk, Beth shares both her own feelings and thoughts about Emily *and* those that arise in response to Ann's. (For example, she talks about the fear that *she* feels.) Because she does *both* of these things, she adds something to what Ann has expressed, and the two of them can move on to a fuller recognition of their thoughts and feelings, one that may not have been possible a moment before.⁷⁰¹

In this scenario, Beth is not necessarily disclosing the kind of personal information about herself one might share with a friend. Nor is Beth expecting Ann to respond to her own fear the way Ann might respond to her personal friends. Rather, she is demonstrating to Ann that she empathetically shares Ann's feelings in a way that Ann recognizes. This recognition makes the empathy mutual, and thus the relationship becomes mutually empowering.⁷⁰²

Many of these same qualities are described by the Pāli cannon as pertaining to a spiritual friend, including empathy:

The friend who is a helpmate,
the friend in happiness and woe,
the friend who gives good counsel,

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 27 [emphasis in the original].

⁷⁰² Ibid., 30.

the friend who sympathises too⁷⁰³

Likewise, could not a chaplain be described as a helpmate through joy and sorrow, who gives good counsel and sympathizes? Yet we must heed warnings about boundaries (which are healthy even among personal friends) or risk what pastoral theologian Carrie Doehring describes as “fusion and empathic contagion, when caregivers feel what care seekers feel without awareness that their emotions have come from the care seeker.”⁷⁰⁴

Indeed, one participant described becoming aware that the anxiety they felt during the spiritual care encounter was actually that of the family in the hospital room. The chaplain was able to avoid “empathic contagion” by relying on the awareness and reflexivity they built through their meditative practice.⁷⁰⁵ This episode demonstrates that Buddhists are likewise susceptible to this danger and have tools for dealing with it, though we cannot always promise those tools will be perfectly applied.

However, most careseekers are not Buddhist, which brings us to the second and third of Collins’s overlapping connotations. The second connotation invokes Buddhist moral frameworks. In this case, a “spiritual” friend is a moral/ethical friend. They treat one well and encourage one to also uphold moral standards. The Pāli scriptures include a list of disreputable folks who would not be considered spiritual friends, such as gamblers, drunks, and liars. Meanwhile, righteous folk, however personally close or distant, would be considered spiritual friends. In this case, the role of the chaplain in moral and ethical matters would qualify them as a

⁷⁰³ “Sigalovada Sutta: The Discourse to Sigala,” trans. Narada Thera [from the Pāli], *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, last modified November 30, 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.31.0.nara.html>.

⁷⁰⁴ Carrie Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 41.

⁷⁰⁵ Interview 010, July 20, 2017.

spiritual friend to all, provided their own behavior is upright. In bringing ethical concerns and challenges to light in particular situations, even when this provokes conflict, they are also acting as a spiritual friend, though others may not thank them for it.

Several participants spoke of the role of the chaplain in this respect, especially in relation to extraordinary efforts in end-of-life care.⁷⁰⁶ Buddhist chaplains are certainly influenced by modern professional and medical ethics (as well as social justice, e.g., feminism, critical race theory, etc.), however, the connotation of *kalyāṇamitra* in this case still exists within a framework of Buddhist morality.

Regardless of how we understand it, *kalyāṇamitra* is a Buddhist concept. While there may be analogous Christian (or other non-Buddhist religious) concepts, in both respects, the Buddhist understanding of spiritual friendship is inflected toward the goal of awakening, while the Christian concepts are inflected toward the goal of salvation through Jesus Christ. Behaviors that may seem similar on the surface have drastically different intentions. According to Collins, the third connotation of the spiritual friend is one who aids another on the path to awakening.⁷⁰⁷ These goals will nuance chaplain's interventions and may result in a mismatch between the intentions of the chaplain and spiritual goals of the careseeker.⁷⁰⁸

This mismatch is, to some extent, evident in the data where participants report hesitancy in facilitating spiritual reflection for non-Buddhist careseekers or describe encouraging non-Buddhist careseekers toward particularly Buddhist goals, such as “awakening to the true nature of self.” We should be cautious of such intentions. What if the true nature of self is an eternal

⁷⁰⁶ Interview 008, July 6, 2017; Reflection 002, July 6, 2017; Reflection 007, July 19, 2017; Reflection 008, July 24, 2017.

⁷⁰⁷ Collins, “*Kalyāṇamitta* and *Kalyāṇamittatā*,” 53.

⁷⁰⁸ This danger is just as present in Buddhist care for Buddhist careseekers as it is in Buddhist care for non-Buddhists.

God-given soul and guiding them through conversations or meditations that evoke experiences of nonself would create a harmful spiritual crisis? While models for care native to Buddhism can be tremendously enriching, we must also carefully consider their implications in interreligious settings, including how we translate and explain them to colleagues.

Even if we, as Buddhists, carefully define the role of the spiritual friend in spiritual care, it will continue to carry the connotations of “friendship” in the English language. This will cause immediate questions among our non-Buddhist professional colleagues, who will quickly (and rightly) point out that careseekers are not “friends.” A chaplain can very quickly get into dangerous waters by crossing professional boundaries into the personal relationship that friendship implies. While we may push back against these questions by relying instead on the Sanskrit term (or Pāli, or Tibetan, or Japanese), using it in a technical sense when we translate it for ourselves, we still run the risk of blurring meanings and boundaries. Though *kalyāṇamitra* does not mean the same thing as “friend” (spiritual or otherwise) in English,⁷⁰⁹ our inevitable need to translate it may lead us to color it with the connotations of the English word. This danger is greater in those chaplains who have not yet developed a sufficient sense of selflessness, nonattachment, and reflexivity. It could be easy to justify behaviors based in attachment and

⁷⁰⁹ Indeed, the word “friend” in English implies a level of personal intimacy that is not necessarily shared in descriptions of *kalyāṇamitra*. In the cases where they are a teacher, a certain level of distance (and hierarchy) is necessary to make the pedagogical relationship function. In the cases where they are a fellow practitioner, this could connote a true friend, but it could also mean a fellow classmate or a member of the same order who supports one’s spiritual goals, but is not personally close. Likewise, in the case of a lay supporter who provides gifts to ensure the survival of an aesthetic or monastic, a certain amount of distance is expected, which would preclude “friendship” in our modern understanding of the term. In general, one could say that a *kalyāṇamitra* may be, but need not necessarily be, a “friend” in the modern sense. Rather, what makes one a *kalyāṇamitra* is the intention of goodwill and actions that benefit one’s progress on the path to awakening. Intimacy at the level of friendship is not a criterion.

clinging to careseekers as appropriate for a spiritual “friend,” when they may not be appropriate for a chaplain.

Perhaps *kalyāṇamitra* is not an appropriate paradigm for the fourth stage. While the term is one of the few in Buddhist literature related to facilitating reflection (see chapter two), was referenced by participants in this study, and is common to all traditions of Buddhism, this may not be sufficient grounds for inclusion in the interpretive framework. Perhaps the fourth stage could do without a particularly Buddhist referent. It may be better to label this as the stage of the “facilitator,” to use the language directly from the chaplaincy standards of professional practice. Yet something in me chafes against that simple accommodation. Buddhists were not consulted when the standards were written. If they had been, perhaps words like “theological” might have been replaced with some of the broader terms suggested by participants. Is “facilitation” any more Buddhist than “theological”? Part of me longs to find a Buddhist model for my work, rather than settle for yet another round of interpretation/translation of a western concept into a non-western worldview. However, while I do not claim objectivity in this matter, I must acknowledge how my biases may be driving me to suggest an inappropriate, or at least somewhat mismatched, paradigm for Buddhist spiritual care. Though I wish to articulate the distinctiveness of Buddhist spiritual care, I must also acknowledge its similarities to other forms of spiritual care.

Theological Reflection Literature

The Three *Prajñās* Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care is like Christian methods in its emphasis on “dialogue,” movement through a process, pragmatic goals, and some, but not all, of its assumptions and analytical methods. It is also distinct from many, but not all, Christian methods in its ultimate purpose.

First, “dialogue” is used throughout the Christian literature in both a metaphorical and literal sense. The correlation method is often characterized as a dialogue, sometimes a debate, between religion and broader culture. One strand of this dialogue is apologetic and the other is dialectical.⁷¹⁰ The chaplains in this study tended toward the dialectical, but both strands were clearly present. They found validation in culture and the cognate fields, particularly psychology, for the efficacy of Buddhist teaching (though they were more likely to point to the truth of their own experiences). Through this dialogue, they also critiqued Buddhism and sought to understand its applicability in interreligious situations and work with non-Buddhists. The dialogue process insists that religion, whether Buddhist or Christianity, account for itself in relation to social norms. Buddhism does this through conversations such as Stephen Batchelor’s article referenced above on guru devotion,⁷¹¹ in which he places his own experience with the practice into conversation with Buddhist traditions and broader culture. The correlation method described by James and Evelyn Whitehead brings these same three conversationalists together: 1) religious tradition, 2) personal and communal experience, and 3) culture and science.⁷¹² Patricia O’Connell Killen and John de Beer likewise use the metaphor of a dialogue between the conversation partners of one’s own experience and one’s religious tradition.⁷¹³ Through dialogue, each transforms the other, much like the process of conversation in spiritual care. In the context of spiritual care, dialogue is also literal and deeply meaningful. The dialogue metaphor can assist chaplains in drawing out particular areas of knowledge and wisdom within careseekers in literal conversations, including the careseeker’s preexisting knowledge of their own religions

⁷¹⁰ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 138.

⁷¹¹ Batchelor, “Why I Quit Guru Yoga,” <https://tricycle.org/magazine/quit-guru-yoga/>.

⁷¹² Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, 6.

⁷¹³ Patricia O’Connell Killen and John de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), viii.

and spiritual traditions. These conversations, both metaphorical and literal, tend to follow a certain progression.

A second area of commonality is the pattern of movement through a process. Several Christian theologians describe methods of movement, usually with four-to-five steps or tasks rather than three. The Whiteheads' own method follows three steps: attending, assertion, and decision, or the "pastoral response."⁷¹⁴ Thomas Groome's praxis-based methods follow five steps: naming/expression, critical reflection, encounter with the Christian story, dialectical hermeneutics between praxis and the Christian story, and decision/response.⁷¹⁵ Joe Holland and Peter Henriot follow a four-step process: "insertion" into the lived experience, social analysis, theological reflection, and pastoral planning for decisions and action.⁷¹⁶ Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer suggest a five-part process: entering the experience, encountering feelings, paying attention, considering and questioning, and insight leading to action.⁷¹⁷ Killen and de Beer's process is much more intersubjective, focusing on awareness of and insight from individual experience through conversation with another. The conversations that reveal said insights also follow a four-part process: focusing, describing the most important aspect, exploring it, and identifying fresh insights into truth and meaning.⁷¹⁸ Christina Zaker outlines a six-step "parabolic" method: naming the experience, exploring it as a community, recognizing what is familiar and also seeing its surprises, acknowledging an invitation to "see God's actions,"

⁷¹⁴ Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, 13.

⁷¹⁵ Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1998), 146-148.

⁷¹⁶ Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 8-10.

⁷¹⁷ Killen and de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection*, 20-27.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 68-69.

and responding to that invitation to recognize God and see how their behaviors contribute to “His reign.”⁷¹⁹ In each case, these methods of reflection move through an arc that roughly aligns with the movement of the Three *Prajñās* of wisdom developed through listening, contemplating, and practicing. In each case, the process begins with one or more stages of inquiry and discovery (i.e., listening); proceeds through one or more stages of reflection, analysis, and dialogue (i.e., contemplating); and culminates in a stage that combines insight and action (i.e., practicing).

Distinctions pertain to underlying assumptions, when and how various conversation partners are brought into the process, who those conversation partners are (i.e., Buddhist tradition or Christian tradition), and what outcomes are emphasized. More distinctions will be explored below, but let us look at one simple example before moving on.

Christina Zaker’s method is so-named due to its use of parables. Eight assumptions serve as the foundation for her six-step process. Three are distinct to Christianity, while the remaining five could be largely shared. The first three include an assumption of God’s presence in each person’s life, the use of parables referencing the “kingdom of God” as portrayed in the gospels, and parables as “good news” for society’s oppressed.⁷²⁰ The remaining assumptions could easily be applied to Buddhism: that parables are familiar and comforting, they can also be challenging, their open-endedness invites a response, one needs to be open to the process, and having a community willing to support the work of challenging and discerning is helpful. Buddhists have used their own stories and cases in the process of reflection, such as the Jataka tales (stories of

⁷¹⁹ Christina Zaker, “Theological Reflection in the Parabolic Mode,” (D.Min diss., Catholic Theological Union at Chicago, 2012), 105-109.

⁷²⁰ Whether or not the final assumption is also applicable to Buddhism is open to interpretation. Many have interpreted the Buddha’s rejection of the caste system of ancient India as a radical act of social justice. Others have downplayed this aspect of his teaching. Either way, the metaphor of “good news” is inherently Christian.

the past lives of the Buddha) and *koans* (cases of enlightened masters) for just this purpose. They are often both familiar and unconventional and rarely lend themselves to a single interpretation. Their use is communal, sometimes even ritualized, and serves to build a community that can reflect together. Thus, we see both similarity and difference in the foundational assumptions in Buddhist and Christian reflection.

Third, Christian and Buddhist methods share many pragmatic goals, including individual and communal learning; personal empowerment; and the transformation of individuals, groups, and society. Correlation-based methods recognize the potential for wisdom in all human beings and seek to draw it out.⁷²¹ Methods such as those of Killen and de Beer develop deeper wisdom in participants.⁷²² This includes learning about one's place in the world, religion's place in the world, and the impact of various social forces and family dynamics.⁷²³ Likewise, Buddhist methods seek to cultivate insight into one's own habits and behaviors, as well as those of others, including families, groups, and society as a whole. Study participants frequently referenced developing insight into their own behavior and, through conversation with careseekers, into the behavior of others. Empowerment and transformation are also shared goals. The methods described above start by drawing out the experiences of individuals (often within a communal context) and relying on their innate wisdom, in addition to the wisdom of their religious traditions. One chaplain said it is "really important for people in trauma, is to not be...further disempowered, and so anything that's kind of empowering is going to be good for them."⁷²⁴ This

⁷²¹ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 139.

⁷²² Killen and de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection*, viii.

⁷²³ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 139-140.

⁷²⁴ Follow-up Interview 008, October 5, 2017.

affirmation and empowerment is an important aspect of the chaplain's work with careseekers and was referenced by multiple participants.

Finally, the two traditions make use of similar analytical methods. Chapter two documents some of the methods employed by the authors of *The Arts of Contemplative Care* in relation to Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Francis Ward's seven-method typology in *Theological Reflection: Methods*. This includes "living human document," narrative 'theology,' correlation, praxis, and local 'theologies.' These methods (and possibly others) were also present in the data from participants. Here, I would like to dwell on the similarities and differences between two of these methods—correlation and praxis—and the participant data.

The chaplains in this study explicitly referenced the activity of correlation in relation to sources of knowledge and process. Both paradigms lead to mutual transformation of the sources of wisdom through dialogue with one another.⁷²⁵ Recall from chapter four that participants cited at least twenty different types of sources, including experience, religious tradition, and secular or cultural sources, which they relied upon to inform their reflections.

In effect, participants cited all three of the Whiteheads' sources that should be brought into dialogue during theological reflection. Naturally, instead of drawing on Christian tradition, they draw on Buddhist traditions. Participants' cultural partners tend more toward the social sciences than popular culture.⁷²⁶ The correlation method emphasizes context and the participants were likewise concerned with context. The chaplains considered causes and conditions,

⁷²⁵ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 161.

⁷²⁶ Popular culture may be more fun as a dialogue partner when it is not a vehicle for misrepresenting and marginalizing one's religion, à la books like *The Dharma of Star Wars*. (I'm sure Christians are familiar with this phenomenon, though I would argue it is to lesser degree and counteracted by the general populace's familiarity with the religion.) For a critical evaluation of this phenomenon, see, for example, Jane Naomi Iwamura, *Virtual Orientalism: Asian Religions and American Popular Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

including systemic social justice concerns, in their evaluation of careseeker situations. They were keenly aware of privilege and oppression, including its history within Buddhist communities and culture at large.

Participants also conceptualized the role of experience in a particularly Buddhist way. Whereas the Whiteheads describe it as both individual and “the collective experience of faith communities,”⁷²⁷ the chaplains in this study tended toward more individual experience, which is then informed by conversation with others. While they integrated the experiences of others into their own reflections (especially when others were able to point out their own subconscious biases and assumptions, which is also an emphasis in the Whiteheads’ model) and into the context of their work, they did not necessarily consider themselves as belonging to a community reifying its identity through shared reflection.⁷²⁸ This might change were these chaplains practicing reflection within Buddhist communities, rather than in interreligious institutions. The Framework for Reflection in Spiritual Care also follows a three-step process similar to the Whiteheads’ model,⁷²⁹ as described above, though the emphasis on process tends more toward wisdom than action (which are not mutually exclusive).

As with other correlation methods, Buddhist methods recognize the “potential of all human creatures”⁷³⁰ to develop wisdom; the Dharma is not exclusive to Buddhism. This imbues the method with a sense of respect for the experiences of others, which helps chaplains remain

⁷²⁷ Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, 5.

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁷²⁹ The two models are similar enough, in fact, that I carefully considered whether I had not simply superimposed the Whiteheads’ model on the data. Clarifying the conceptual categories lead to the development of the four stages, and a deep dive into the literature on the Three *Prajnas* convinced me that the Framework was genuine and not a subconscious interpretation.

⁷³⁰ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 139.

open and not-knowing. However, these chaplains do not perceive this shared wisdom to be a result of God’s activity in the world; in other words, as revelation. Nor do they correlate knowledge of God or His nature to being “authentically and normatively human.”⁷³¹ Rather, for them, wisdom is observable in oneself and in the world by any human being as a constituent factor of reality. This creates a parallel to the notion of “anonymous Christianity,”⁷³² in that several chaplains referred to the innate *Buddhanature* (potential for enlightenment) of their careseekers, be they Buddhist or not, creating a kind of “anonymous Buddhism.” Despite this tendency, they also seemed cautious about assuming Buddhism would be good for non-Buddhists. On one hand, they attempted to account for the truth and efficacy of Buddhism in the “marketplace of ideas,” while also trying not to impose Buddhist concepts on non-Buddhist careseekers. Without surveying the careseekers, it is difficult to know how successfully they held these tensions in balance.

The second analytical method resonant within the data was praxis, or “‘*performative knowledge*,’ that is, a way of knowing that is inseparable from doing.”⁷³³ Praxis has the strongest resonance with *prajñā*. Each of the Three *Prajñās*—listening, contemplating, and practicing—are *-mayīprajñā*, or for the development of wisdom or the basis of wisdom. Thus, we see “value-committed action”⁷³⁴ in this Buddhist paradigm. Graham, Walton, and Ward state that this method “places primacy on *orthopraxis* (right action) rather than *orthodoxy* (right belief).”⁷³⁵

⁷³¹ Ibid., 167.

⁷³² Ibid., 139.

⁷³³ Ibid., 170.

⁷³⁴ Ibid., 170.

⁷³⁵ Ibid., 170.

Buddhism may not make this distinction, considering *prajñāpāramitā* (the perfection of wisdom) to be the combination of Right View (*samyagdr̥ṣṭi*) and Right Intention (*samyaksamkalpa*) leading to Right Action (*samyakkarmānta*), Right Speech (*samyagvāc*), and the other aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path (*āryāṣṭāṅgamārgah*).⁷³⁶ Right View pertains to an accurate understanding of the nature of reality (as empty) and the self (as nonself). Right Intention means being motivated by goodwill toward all and avoiding the three poisons of hatred, greed, and delusion. These predicate correct behavior, but do not constitute it, thus distinguishing *prajñā* from praxis. Nevertheless, the primary methods for cultivating *prajñā* are action-based (i.e., through the tasks of listening, contemplating, and practicing). Action is thus the “origin and the end” of *prajñā*, much the same way “practice is both the origin and the end of theological reflection.”⁷³⁷

Both originate in traditions of liberation, though the praxis tradition views liberation through the lenses of social justice and liberation theology. These would be considered part of the conventional truth of Buddhism, which views liberation through a dual perspective of conventional and ultimate—liberation from bodily suffering in this life (including mental, emotional, and economic suffering) and liberation from the cycles of rebirth (*saṃsāra*) that lead to suffering in future lives. In the sense of conventional truth, Buddhism agrees that ‘theology,’ or the fruits of reflection, are contextual and subjective, constructed according to our backgrounds, time, and place in society, as praxis methods presume.⁷³⁸ However, *prajñā* is a synonym for ultimate truth, which is not contextual in this way. Both praxis and *prajñā*

66. ⁷³⁶ See “*āryāṣṭāṅgamārga*” in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*,

⁷³⁷ Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 170.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, 197.

recognize the limitations of language,⁷³⁹ though *prajñā*'s connotations are more extreme. Not only is language loaded with all kinds of contextual and hierarchical assumptions, but it is also ultimately insufficient for grasping wisdom and must be transcended altogether. Ultimately, the fruits of *śruta-cinta-bhāvanāmayīprajñā* are beyond words.

I have now pointed out several similarities and differences, though not the major difference, between Christian and Buddhist methods, which the distinction between praxis and *prajñā* hints at. Most importantly, the purpose of reflection in the two traditions is different. I speak not merely of the divergence of soteriological goals, as significant as that is. I speak of the purpose of reflection itself. With one exception, Christian methods tend to move toward action, decisions, and guiding change. Buddhist methods tend to move toward wisdom. Neither focus entirely obviates the other. Wisdom drives Right Action, and Right Action contributes to wisdom. Yet I notice a distinct emphasis when comparing the data and Buddhist literature to the Christian literature on reflection. Participants characterize the ultimate goal of reflection, either their own or another's, as insight, wisdom, or understanding. This may serve as the basis for action, but in the context of spiritual care, there is often little opportunity for constructive action in the face of illness, injury, aging, and death,⁷⁴⁰ whereas opportunities for wisdom in these situations abounds. Killen and de Beer's method is one of the few to de-emphasize action or decision and move toward insight and "meaning-making," which is closer to the Buddhist purpose of developing wisdom. Wisdom can, should, and does, of course, inform action and decision-making, but does not necessitate it.⁷⁴¹ Moreover, wisdom is not synonymous with

⁷³⁹ Ibid., 197.

⁷⁴⁰ Though there is not necessarily no opportunity at all. Empowerment was also a common goal of chaplains working with careseekers, especially in relation to decisions around medical care for themselves and family members.

⁷⁴¹ Killen and de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection*.

“meaning-making,” which is ultimately another conceptual exercise to be transcended in the attainment of *prajñā*. Thus, some participants de-emphasized the usefulness of meaning-making as an activity, while all affirmed the importance of insight and wisdom.

Limitations

There are definite limitations in this research and in the research methods I have chosen. Some limitations concern contradictions in the data over how different participants understand the purpose of reflection and the terms used to describe it. Participants also diverged on how they related their own experience and tradition to their work. These contradictions did not have a major impact on the overall Framework and thesis. Gaps and omissions in the data, however, have a much greater possibility of altering the Framework and proving or disproving the thesis. Should I interview another six chaplains on these topics, I may discover that the process of listening-contemplating-practicing is not nearly as straightforward as it appears, or that the four stages I’ve identified are not so easily distinguished from one another. While the Framework fits the existing data, as more data is collected, it may require adaptation or replacement. Theoretical overreach is another distinct danger. While it was developed in response to questions about reflection, the Framework has connotations for spiritual care as a whole. However, due to the focus of the questions, those connotations are not as well represented in the data pool as they could be.

Contradictions in the Data

Participants did not always agree with one another. This led to a few contradictions in the data, which were captured and summarized in the memoing process. Participant opinions could be charted along several diverging spectrums, with at least one participant at both ends, and others who fell somewhere in between. Some chaplains questioned the efficacy of reflection to

improve spiritual care or, at least, sounded a caution that it does not always do so.⁷⁴² Most, however, affirmed that it was integral to their own learning process and to careseekers' ability to develop insight into their own situations.

Two spectrums of participant opinion are concerned with the terms used to describe this activity: chapter four discusses how participants responded to the term “theological” and the term “reflection.” Some agreed that these terms were applicable to Buddhist practice,⁷⁴³ while others rejected them.⁷⁴⁴ However, the semantic difference did not manifest in substantive differences in spiritual care praxis, except to the extent that some participants who rejected the terms also hesitated to facilitate theological reflection for others. This hesitation correlated more to their self-reported lack of familiarity with Christian traditions. Other participants who likewise rejected these terms but had a self-reported familiarity with Christianity did not demonstrate the same hesitance.

Other divergences in the data concern the role of experience and tradition. Some chaplains stated they relied little on traditional sources (e.g., scriptures, books, and teachers) in their work as chaplains. Instead, they preferred to rely on their own direct experience.⁷⁴⁵ Other chaplains found these sources integral to their spiritual care practice and easily referenced them.⁷⁴⁶ It is difficult to ascertain if this divergence is systemic or individual. That is, do chaplains from particular traditions tend to rely more on their own experiences? Buddhism certainly includes traditions with which this approach would be consistent, especially Zen traditions that emphasize “just sitting” over scholarly study. Or is it a matter of personal

⁷⁴² Exemplified by Interview 010, July 20, 2017, and Interview 005, July 15, 2017.

⁷⁴³ Exemplified by Interview 008, July 6, 2017, and Interview 014, August 15, 2017.

⁷⁴⁴ Exemplified by Interview 004, June 1, 2017, and Interview 012, August 10, 2017.

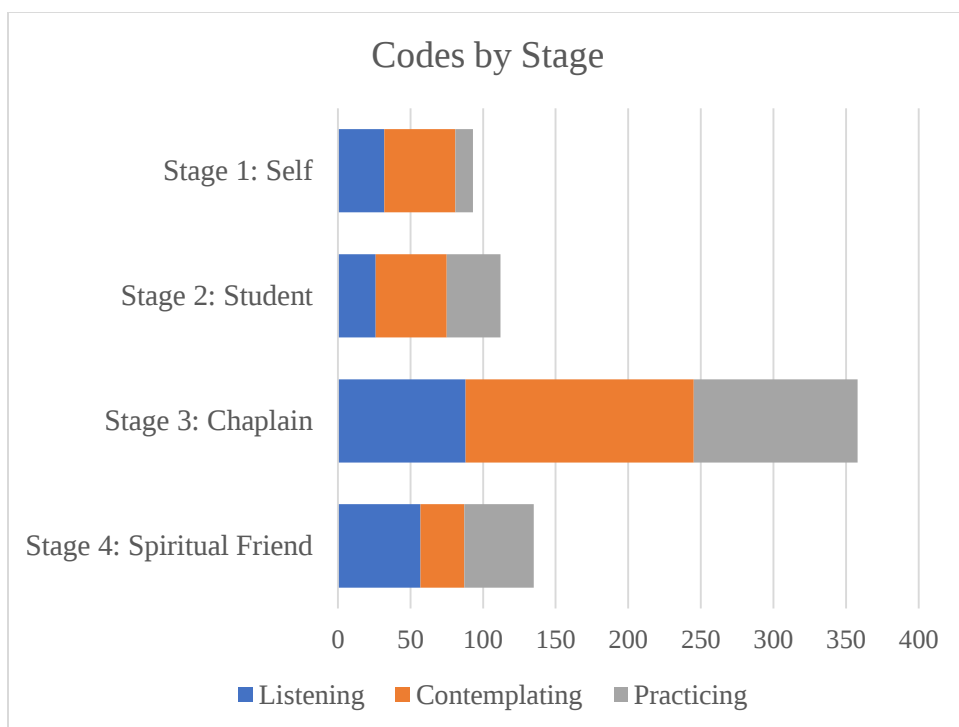
⁷⁴⁵ Exemplified by Interview 002.

⁷⁴⁶ Exemplified by Interview 007 and Interview 005.

preference and temperament? More data from a wider pool of participants would be necessary to address this question. Even participants who emphasized direct experience referenced Dharma concepts, which they must have learned at some point through written or oral teachings, before verifying them through experience.

Gaps and Omissions in the Data

While contradictions in the data were limited, gaps and omissions in certain categories remain a distinct possibility. As we can see from the chart below, a majority of the data pertains to “stage three: chaplain,” with “stage four: spiritual friend” being the next most populous.



This is the result of the line of questioning in initial interviews and prompts, which focused on spiritual care, particularly on the process of reflection in learning how to be a chaplain. Follow-up interviews collected further data on stage four, doubling the information on its theoretical categories, especially in relation to wisdom developed by listening and practicing. Data on some theoretical categories remain limited though, particularly stage one practicing and stage two

listening. More data on these categories will be useful to understanding Buddhist chaplain spiritual formation and clarifying distinctions between the stages of self, student, and chaplain.

Stage four contemplating is also a somewhat small category, which can be interpreted in three different ways. First, as spiritual friends, chaplains may engage less in the development of wisdom through contemplation for their own sake; rather, they are interested in assisting the careseeker in developing wisdom through reflecting on and contemplating their situation. The wisdom developed by the careseeker, while critical to good spiritual care, is not always internalized by the spiritual caregiver in relation to their own wisdom. It is the careseeker's reflection and insight, not the chaplain's reflection and insight.

Second, there could still be some ambiguity between the theoretical categories of wisdom developed by contemplating and wisdom developed by practicing at stage four. While I have categorized spiritual assessment as part of "practice" at this stage, inasmuch as I perceive it to be the application of one's wisdom or discernment, an argument could also be made that assessment belongs to the theoretical category of contemplation, because it involves reflection and judgment. This would enlarge the category of contemplation and diminish the category of practicing to appropriate spiritual care interventions.

The third interpretation is that five follow-up interviews were simply too few to collect sufficient information on these categories. There is more to learn; I simply did not have the time to learn it. Any of these three interpretations can fuel further research and scholarship in this area.

Potential for Overreach

Due to the potential for gaps and omissions outlined above, this theory may be in danger of overreach both in scope and application. I have already acknowledged that it suffers from "scope creep," whereby in setting out to develop a theory related to reflection methods, I have

instead developed a theory about spiritual formation, spiritual care praxis, and reflection methods. In setting out to document what Buddhist chaplains do and develop an interpretation that accounts for what they do, I may have strayed far into normative and pragmatic territory. The very existence of such an interpretive framework invites its application to judge the spiritual formation of novice chaplains in relation to the stages and then apply the *prajñās* according to the behaviors associated with each category in spiritual care.

Overreach may be a byproduct of the methods I have chosen. Grounded theory attempts to build theories from the “ground” of the data. We may begin with topics and questions, but if the data collection process takes us in another direction, or if what the participants share is beyond the scope of our own limited thinking, then new directions and ideas can develop.

This was also the case with one of my favorite grounded theorists, social-work researcher Brené Brown. She set out specifically to study shame and vulnerability in women. What she developed instead is the theory of wholehearted living. She speaks candidly about the effect this research had on her in a 2010 TED talk.⁷⁴⁷ The appendix of her book, *Daring Greatly*, outlines her data and methods in fascinating detail.⁷⁴⁸ I do not claim to equal the rigor of Brown’s research, which involved hundreds of interviews, thousands of pieces of primary and secondary data, and over ten thousand cases that she analyzed. However, her research provides a good example of starting from one point and ending up with something larger than one had anticipated. Brown did indeed learn a great deal about shame and vulnerability, just as I have learned a great deal about reflection, but we both also learned far more than that. Charmaz

⁷⁴⁷ Brené Brown, “The Power of Vulnerability,” *TEDxHouston*. June 2010, https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability.

⁷⁴⁸ Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead* (New York: Avery, 2012), 255-260.

acknowledges, “The grounded theory research process is fluid, interactive, and open-ended.”⁷⁴⁹ Likewise, this research is open-ended. It is a beginning, not a conclusion.

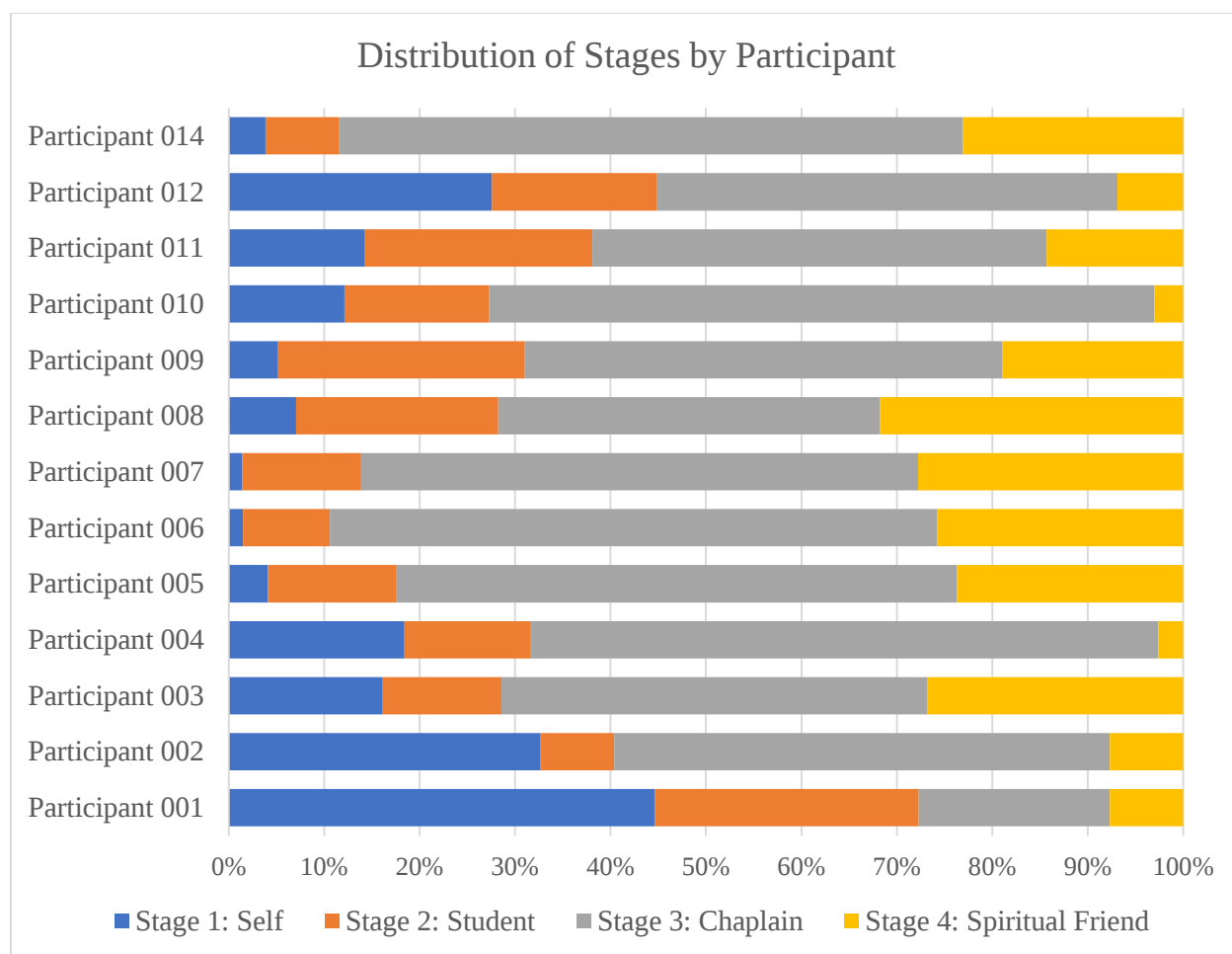
Implications & Applications

There are various implications and applications for this research, based on context and audience. First, I consider the normative paradox of who is describing what is can sometimes imply what ought to be. I then proceed to the various uses of this research, including facilitating reflection, guiding education, discerning spiritual formation, suggesting spiritual care praxis, and developing wisdom. These are not the only implications and applications of this work, but they are the major ones. This section is also critical of these applications. It acknowledges their potential, as well as their pitfalls. More work will be necessary before adopting any of them.

Normative Paradoxes

The normative paradox is that in describing what is, we imply what ought to be. In setting out upon this research, I sought to describe and interpret what Buddhist chaplains do, why they do it, and how they understand it. I identified a reflective progression common to the research participants that may also be common to other Buddhist chaplains. The chart below illustrates that all participants demonstrate all four stages of the Framework to a greater or lesser degree.

⁷⁴⁹ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 320.



As we can see, the majority of the data pertained to stage three, which is not surprising, given the focus of the questions on reflection in spiritual care. Some chaplains spoke very little about reflection in relation to their earliest spiritual practice, and some chaplains rarely described attributes or behaviors related to spiritual friendship as part of their chaplaincy. When participants described very little of a stage, I carefully re-examined their materials to ensure that the data was coded appropriately and critically. I sought to ensure that I was not simply categorizing statements in the data according to my own normative assumptions about what ought to be there. I can never be entirely certain I was successful, which is why others must critically examine this Framework and why I must continue to collect data and conduct analyses related to this and other topics relevant to Buddhist chaplaincy.

Having validated the data to the best of my ability, I must conclude that if these stages are not universal, they are at least fairly common. Of course, this can lead to the paradox that what is common is normative. I must warn against this assumption. If history is any teacher, it is dangerous to assume what is “ought to be.” Many morally reprehensible practices have been justified this way. While I cannot believe the Framework could be as dangerous as some historical mistakes, it is also a product of its context. As Cheryl Giles reminds us, our present context remains rife with white, male, cis-gendered, heteronormative, and able-bodied privilege and socioeconomic exploitation of the poor, working classes, people of color, and other marginalized groups.⁷⁵⁰ There is no reason to assume this work is immune from these influences, though I have tried to be aware of them. They could appear within the data themselves via statements provided by the study’s participants; in my analysis of the data and choices to privilege certain themes, topics, codes, and categories over others; and in my explanations here.

To resolve the normative question, other resources need to be placed in conversation, principally the faculty and CPE supervisors responsible for training Buddhist chaplains and the Buddhist teachers and masters with more experience teaching the Dharma and gauging the spiritual formation of students. This activity will constitute the remaining two tasks of Richard Osmer’s framework for practical theology (see chapter one): the normative task and the pragmatic task. I am not comfortable declaring on my own what ought to be normative (though I realize I may have strayed fairly far into that territory). This requires broader dialogue with the practice and professional community. Moreover, it may be that what is appropriate for one Buddhist in one context may not be appropriate for another in a different context, let alone

⁷⁵⁰ Giles, “Beyond the Color Line,” 43-45.

appropriate for non-Buddhists. The pragmatic task that follows will depend on the outcomes of the normative task, though it may be related to the following implications and applications.

Facilitating Reflection

The Framework is, of course, principally intended to describe how Buddhist chaplains facilitate ‘theological’ reflection in the context of pastoral care. In describing how several Buddhist chaplains behave, it can also prescribe how other Buddhist chaplains might behave if they wanted to achieve similar results. We can learn from example.

The flow of the Three *Prajnas* of listening, contemplating, and practicing repeats across the four stages, though it gains particular relevance in stages three and four. Moreover, the thesis asserts that chaplains with a strong experience of employing listening-contemplating-practicing to develop wisdom in stages one and two will be better equipped to enter stages three and four. In stage four, the chaplain facilitates reflection for others in the context of spiritual care by listening to them, assisting them in contemplating their situation, and helping them develop insight that can, if appropriate, predicate action, decision-making, or personal growth. During this process, the chaplain practices many of the crucial skills for spiritual care, including active listening; astute observation; skillful responding, reframing, and questioning; and careful assessment and intervention. This process is described more fully in chapter five as stage four of the framework.

Designing Pedagogy and Curriculum

Buddhist chaplains working in interreligious settings receive their training through two primary venues: graduate education and clinical pastoral education. Graduate school consists of advanced coursework in religion and pastoral care. Standards are set by the Association of

Theological Schools,⁷⁵¹ the Association of Professional Chaplains,⁷⁵² and other groups. Buddhist chaplains must meet these standards by receiving a seventy-two-unit graduate-level degree, usually a Masters of Divinity (MDiv), or proving equivalency. Clinical pastoral education (CPE) is a separate process governed by the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education⁷⁵³ and similar organizations. Chaplains who wish to become board-certified⁷⁵⁴ must complete four units of CPE, amounting to 1200 clinical and 400 educational hours of training. Thus far, there has been limited dialogue between Buddhist traditions and these standards, and that dialogue has not yet been grounded in empirical research about the effects of this curriculum and these standards on Buddhist chaplains or those they serve. This research is thus an important addition to this conversation.

The role of faculty and supervisors in these programs are distinct but overlapping. Both play a part in the education, both academic and practical, and spiritual formation of the chaplain-in-training. The Framework described in chapter five can be applied for both purposes and in both contexts. Academically, the Three *Prajñās* have often been used as a structure for learning the Dharma. They can be applied on a small scale, such as in a two-hour class on meditation that involves first listening to instructions, then a period of discussion, and culminates in actual meditation practice and the development of direct insight. This progression can also be used on a larger scale, over several weeks, months, or years. In their first semester or year of education, for

⁷⁵¹ Associate of Theological Schools, “Standards and Notations,” <https://www.ats.edu/accrediting/standards-and-notations>.

⁷⁵² Association of Professional Chaplains, “Common Standards for Professional Chaplaincy,” http://www.professionalchaplains.org/files/professional_standards/common_standards/common_standards_professional_chaplaincy.pdf.

⁷⁵³ Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, <https://www.acpe.edu/>.

⁷⁵⁴ Board of Chaplaincy Certification, Inc., “BCCI Certification,” <http://bcciprofessionalchaplains.org/content.asp?pl=25&contentid=25>.

example, students might be expected to listen and absorb new information. Later, they would reflect on that knowledge and integrate it into their own understanding. Finally, they would be able to practice that knowledge both through academic accomplishments and caregiving skills in CPE and other venues. As mentioned in chapter five, this process is not necessarily neat and linear, but rather iterative and cumulative.

Assessing Spiritual Formation

The Framework could also be a useful tool in helping students, faculty, and supervisors gauge spiritual formation. Because the Three *Prajñās* focus on developing wisdom, not just on the tasks themselves, there is data on the hallmarks of wisdom at each stage (explored further below). In relation to spiritual formation, for example, one can discern if one has developed wisdom based on listening when one is no longer “hooked” by the careseeker’s distress, avoiding what Doebling describes as “empathic contagion.”⁷⁵⁵ This would be a hallmark of stage three of the Framework. Naturally, the stages are not meant to be a neat and tidy progression, like ever-higher levels of a video game. However, when a student displays this attitude/behavior consistently, one can discern their skill-level and help them progress further.

The Framework also serves a further purpose for non-Buddhist faculty and CPE supervisors: placing the Buddhist chaplain’s spiritual formation in a Buddhist paradigm. This is especially helpful when judging the fruits of *prajñā*, such as emptiness, nonself, and nonattachment, which may not be classically associated with advanced spiritual formation in other religious and psychological paradigms. As we have already seen, the sometimes esoteric and frequently “foreign” nature of these ideas to non-Buddhist faculty, supervisors, and peers sometimes hinders the spiritual formation of Buddhist chaplains. When a Buddhist chaplain is

⁷⁵⁵ Doebling, *The Practice of Pastoral Care*, 65.

talking about the exchange of self with other in reference to egolessness, it would be easy for a non-Buddhist to become concerned about boundary issues and the risk of burnout, without realizing that a genuine⁷⁵⁶ experience of nonself obviates these concerns.

Fully assessing the spiritual formation of a Buddhist chaplain in their progress toward awakening is and should remain the purview of trained and recognized Buddhist teachers, masters, and institutions. Nevertheless, non-Buddhist faculty and supervisors could benefit from this Framework as a useful heuristic for making an “educated guess” and either referring chaplains-in-training to their own spiritual resources or consulting with other professionals (including, but not limited to, Buddhist professionals) should something seem amiss (if, for example, a student is spiritually bypassing signs of unhealthy attachment and burnout by claiming egolessness as the basis for their behavior). Faculty and supervisors will continue to be able to assess their performance *as chaplains* according to this and other frameworks.

Guiding Spiritual Care Praxis

The Framework provides new chaplains with a structure to follow (flexibly, one hopes) in their interactions with careseekers. It is both a tool for discernment—to discover where a careseeker is and what they might need—and a guide for appropriate interaction. It describes intentions to cultivate before entering this work; tasks that one may use, as appropriate; and the outcomes of those tasks, by which to judge the efficacy of one’s actions, particularly in relation to one’s own spiritual formation as a chaplain. Judging the efficacy of these actions for careseekers with more certainty would require research involving the careseekers themselves.

⁷⁵⁶ Assessing whether or not such an experience is genuine may be difficult, but can generally be demonstrated by the level of distress present in the chaplain. Nonself is characterized by the sense of “nothing to protect,” which leads to setting down one’s normal burden of egoic preoccupation, a sense of spaciousness or relief, and gentle confidence beyond one’s ability to justify with words. My description is imperfect. This is an area in which further research with qualified Buddhist teachers is needed.

Listening, contemplating, and practicing is a simple process, but it is also infinitely deep. It can be broken down in many ways and adapted to many contexts. The spiritual care literature, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, provides many helpful guidelines for individual pieces, such as active listening or reframing techniques. This Framework helps place those techniques in relation with one another in a way that improves comprehension and retention. Thus, the Framework serves as a useful heuristic and mnemonic during spiritual care.

Participants in this study reflected on how even a simple structure can help them be less anxious and more intentional when entering caregiving situations. One chaplain developed a four-part process as a result of their own reflection on practice:

And the one I came up with was going through four phases, where it was arrive, allow, invite, and bless. Where I would arrive, and that's kind of the muscle memory, the real slow and present way of embodying myself in the room. Allow was allowing them to lead the conversation, like letting them be where they're at, and not trying to force anything. And then invite was inviting, whether there is something they want to lift up that is of concern or celebration, if it hasn't been done already, or more if they've started to. And less is, could be just, "I wish you well," or, "would you like a prayer or meditation?" So, um, I think before, going through reflection, processing, and feedback, I was not so clear on my approach.⁷⁵⁷

The Framework can serve as a guide in this way and also help chaplains reflect on their practice and devise their own theories and guides. In the latter instance, I sincerely hope that fellow chaplains take the time to devise, share, and discuss their own practices to enrich the profession.

Developing Prajñā (Wisdom)

Finally, the Framework is, through its reliance on the Three *Prajñās*, a method for developing wisdom. Chapter five outlines the nature of the wisdom developed by those who

⁷⁵⁷ Interview 001, July 24, 2017; this participant was the only Board-Certified Chaplain in the study and demonstrated a clear ability to reflect on and articulate their past experiences and present practice in a more advanced way than other study participants.

listen, contemplate, and practice in relation to each of the four stages, characterizing it as the “fruition” of each task at each stage. It also provides an overview of the concept of *prajñā* in the Buddhist literature, though this review was, by necessity, brief (and the literature is vast). The progression of wisdom begins with the development of Right Intention and a cursory understanding of Right View or, at least, language to articulate it, if not directly experience it. Slowly, this language is internalized, integrated, and used to understand and interpret one’s own experiences, providing insight into causation, followed by further insight into the pervasive nature of suffering. This is the internalization of the Four Noble Truths.

Through being accompanied by spiritual friends, one then begins the process of developing confidence in the Dharma, diligence in one’s practice, and a sense of support from a community of practitioners that fuels one’s practice to go deeper. As one works with others, one’s ability to articulate the wisdom they experience grows, and they also gain access to deeper observations about themselves and their work, perspectives hidden by their own biases and assumptions, which are now brought to light. They begin not only to see the web of causation, but also to understand their place within it and within their own community and context. They can see and apply many of the subtler parts of the Dharma, including the Two Truths and wisdom that serves as the foundation for moral behavior. Their practice of the virtues is enriched, which in turn fortifies their wisdom.

As they come to know themselves (and their nonselves) better, they become more open and receptive to other people, developing a genuine and nonprotective form of listening to others. They develop nonattachment, first to their own assumptions, then to their agendas for others. When one no longer worries over and protects the self, one develops a sense of authentic confidence, mindfulness, and openheartedness. Participants report becoming more “authentic,”

while simultaneously becoming less invested in fixed notions of their identity. They feel sufficient in their Buddhist identity, while they are also able to put that identity aside as needed by careseekers. This allows them to genuinely connect with careseekers and others and respond spontaneously and skillfully (with *upāya*) in various situations.

Finally, they can facilitate the journey for others. Careseekers experience many benefits as a result, and the chaplain's wisdom continues to grow as they experience a sense of the sacred through this act of placing the other first, if only momentarily. By walking with careseekers, they gain far more experience in the specificity and complexity of human suffering than they could derive from their own singular experience, thus driving home the content of the Four Noble Truths. Finally, chaplains experience a sense of selflessness and transcend their own ego. Other is self and self is other; they are not separate or different. This results in liberation from suffering and ultimate wellbeing. Thus, the path of the chaplain is also the path of the *arhant*, the path of the *bodhisattva*, and the path of the buddhas.

Conclusion

The journey described above is, of course, not that of any one chaplain. It is a composite. Different insights will strike different chaplains at different stages. However, in general, the participants of this study tend to demonstrate this pattern. Stages one and two function much like the “preparatory” stage of the *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma*. Chaplains who have sufficiently traversed these stages and experienced their fruits are then better able to provide spiritual care and facilitate theological reflection for others. This is the primary thesis of this work. Inversely, chaplains who struggle in spiritual care and find it difficult to facilitate reflection for others will need the guidance of strong role models who can accompany them through reflection and build their skills. I have chosen to characterize this as the behavior of a spiritual friend, or

kalyāṇamitra. It may also be the behavior of the *bodhisattva*, a buddha, or, simply, a chaplain. I am open to discovering new paradigms for stage four as I research the matter further. However, I am convinced that this stage exists in the progression of a Buddhist chaplain's skills. Stages beyond this may likewise be revealed were I to collect a pool of more advanced interview subjects. I find qualitative research exciting for these very reasons.

There are many questions that remain unanswered. The data suggest many alternative avenues of research that I was not able to pursue. I would like to conclude by listing some of them, in no particular order. First, the Buddhist chaplains in this study provided many enlightening answers to why they chose to pursue the profession. Many saw it as an extension of their Buddhist practice. I wondered about how the social context influenced their choice of profession. In centuries past, a Buddhist who might have wanted to advance their spiritual practice might have become a monk or nun and joined a temple or monastery. In today's context, several participants decided that graduate school and a religious vocation was the obvious choice. Did they consider becoming monastics or clergy? (Only one layperson mentioned considering this option, and two participants were monastics before becoming chaplains.) Among those who became ordained after their studies began, did they do so out of a desire to become clergy or because ordination is expected of chaplains in a Christian paradigm?

In addition to motivations, it was fascinating to hear how participants connected their Buddhist practice with their spiritual care profession. Within these responses were several nascent theories of Buddhist care that could be further researched and developed. Some of them see chaplaincy as an extension of practice, as mentioned above; some rely on classic Buddhist paradigms, particularly the *bodhisattva*; and at least one saw an inverse relationship, developing

their Buddhist practice in order to a chaplain.⁷⁵⁸ Some saw their chaplaincy as a mindfulness-based practice,⁷⁵⁹ while others saw it as a compassion-based practice.⁷⁶⁰ Yet others were drawn by the need to provide spiritual care to those who suffer, perceiving chaplaincy as a social duty.⁷⁶¹ One described spiritual care as an “art” and objected to scientific methods to quantify and measure it.⁷⁶² What are the implications of the metaphor of spiritual care as an art? Motivations and the relationship between chaplaincy and Buddhist practice is a rich area for research.

Throughout this work, I have tried to outline where more research is needed and described particular audiences to be queried, including careseekers who benefit from the work of Buddhist chaplains, faculty, CPE supervisors, multidisciplinary teammates, and Buddhist teachers, institutions, and authorities. I hope that in completing this work and sending it out into the world, these parties will offer their feedback and correct any errors I have made. I will also continue to proactively reach out and work with these groups to continue advancing the field.

⁷⁵⁸ Interview 004, June 1, 2017.

⁷⁵⁹ Interview 001, July 27, 2017.

⁷⁶⁰ Interview 008, July 6, 2017.

⁷⁶¹ Interview 011, July 7, 2017.

⁷⁶² Interview 006, June 6, 2017.

Bibliography

“About the HBC Buddhism & Race Conference,” *Harvard Buddhist Community*, April 2016, <https://harvardbuddhistcommunity.wordpress.com/>

Aitken, Bill. “Intrafaith Considerations.” In *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, edited by Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher, 363-364. Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016.

“Alagaddupama Sutta: The Water-Snake Simile” (MN 22). Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*. Last modified December 17, 2013. <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.022.than.html>

Amstutz, Galen. “Kiyozawa in Concord: A Historian Looks again at Shin Buddhism in America.” *The Eastern Buddhist* 41, no. 1 (2010): 101-150.

Anderson, Lorin W., and David R. Krathwohl. *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. New York: Longman, 2001.

Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. *APCE Standards and Manuals: A Standard for Spiritual Care and Education*, last modified January 1, 2016, <http://www.manula.com/manuals/acpe/acpe-manuals/2016/en/topic/cover-page>

---. “Information For Prospective Students: Frequently Asked Questions,” https://www.acpe.edu/ACPE/_Students/FAQ_S.aspx

---. Main Page. <https://www.acpe.edu/>

Association of Professional Chaplains. “Common Standards for Professional Chaplaincy.” http://www.professionalchaplains.org/files/professional_standards/common_standards/common_standards_professional_chaplaincy.pdf

Association of Theological Schools. “Standards and Notations.” <https://www.ats.edu/accrediting/standards-and-notations>

Baker, Cynthia, Judith Wuest, and Phyllis Noerager Stern. “Method Slurring: The Grounded Theory/Phenomenology Example.” *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 17 (1992): 1355-1360.

Barrett, Deborah J. “A Zen Approach to the Psychological and Pastoral Care of Dying Persons.” PhD diss., United States International University, San Diego Campus, 1994.

Bastis, Madeline Ko-i. “A Buddhist Response to Larry Dossey.” In *Scientific and Pastoral Perspectives on Intercessory Prayer: An Exchange Between Larry Dossey, M.D., and Health Care Chaplains*, edited by Larry Dossey and Larry VandeCreek. New York: Haworth Pastoral Press, 1998: 87-96.

- . *Heart of Forgiveness: A Practical Path to Healing*. York Beach, ME: Red Wheel/Weiser, 2011.
- . *Peaceful Dwelling: Meditations for Healing and Living*. Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 2000.
- . "Thom's Garden." *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 50, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 221-222.
- Batchelor, Stephen. "Why I Quit Guru Yoga." *Tricycle*, Winter 2017, <https://tricycle.org/magazine/quit-guru-yoga/>
- "Befriending the Suttas: Tips on Reading the Pali Discourses." *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*. Last Modified November 30, 2013. <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/befriending.html>
- Beitel, Mark, Maria Genova, Zev Schuman-Olivier, Ruth Arnold, S. Kelly Avants, and Arthur Margolin. "Reflections by Inner-City Drug Users on a Buddhist-Based Spirituality-Focused Therapy: A Qualitative Study." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 77, no. 1 (2007): 1-9.
- Berlin, Chris. "Widening the Circle: Engaged *Bodhicitta* in Hospital Chaplaincy." In *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, edited by Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller, 81-92. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- Bhikkhu, Thanissaro. "Wings to Awakening: Part I." Translated by Geoffrey DeGraff. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*. Last modified November 30, 2013. <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/wings/part1.html>
- Bidwell, Duane. "Collaborating with the Spirit: Brief Spiritual Direction in Congregational Ministry." In *Strategies for Brief Pastoral Counseling*, edited by Howard W. Stone, 122-138. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001.
- . "Deep Listening and Virtuous Friendship: Spiritual Care in the Context of Religious Multiplicity." *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 35 (2015): 3-13.
- . "Developing an Adequate 'Pneumatraumatology': Understanding the Spiritual Impacts of Traumatic Injury." *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 56, no. 2 (2002): 135-143.
- Biletzki, Anat, and Anat Matar. "Ludwig Wittgenstein: Language Games and Family Resemblance." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Fall 2016 Edition*, edited by Edward N. Zalta. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/wittgenstein/>
- Bilotti-Stark, Kathryn. "Compassionate Awareness and Transformation: The Relevancy of Mindfulness Teachings and Practices in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care." Master's thesis, Graduate Theological Union, 2012.
- Block, Jennifer. "Toward a Definition of Buddhist Chaplaincy." In *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, edited by Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller, 3-7. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.

- Blum, Harrison. "Mindfulness Equity and Western Buddhism: Reaching People of Low Socioeconomic Status and People of Color." *International Journal of Dharma Studies* 2, no. 1 (2014): 1-18.
- Board of Chaplaincy Certification, Inc. "BCCI Certification." <http://bcciprofessionalchaplains.org/content.asp?pl=25&contentid=25>
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *Dhamma Reflections: Collected Essays of Bhikkhu Bodhi*. Onalaska, WA: Pariyatti Publishing, 2016.
- Breitman, Barbara Eve. "Foundations of Jewish Pastoral Care: Skills and Techniques." In *Jewish Pastoral Care: A Practical Handbook from Traditional & Contemporary Sources*, 2nd Edition, edited by Dayle A. Freidman, 95-124. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2013.
- Brown, Brené. *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*. New York: Avery, 2012.
- . "The Power of Vulnerability." Filmed June 2010. *TEDxHouston* video, 20:13. Posted n.d. https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability.
- Buddhaghosa, and Bhikkhu Ñā ṇamoli. *The Path of Purification: Visuddhimagga*. Seattle, WA: BPE Pariyatti Editions, 1999.
- Burck, J. R., and R. J. Hunter. "Pastoral Theology, Protestant." In *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, edited by R. J. Hunter, 867. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1990. Quoted in Elaine L. Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London: SCM Press, 2005), 6.
- Buswell, Robert E., Jr., and Donald S. Lopez, Jr., eds. *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013.
- Cadge, Wendy. "Gendered Religious Organizations." *Gender & Society* 18, no. 6 (2004): 777-793.
- Cahalan, Kathleen A. "Three Approaches to Practical Theology, Theological Education, and the Church's Ministry." *International Journal of Practical Theology* 9, no. 1 (2005): 63-94.
- Carroll, Michael. *Awake at Work: 35 Practical Buddhist Principles for Discovering Clarity and Balance in the Midst of Work's Chaos*. Boston: Shambhala, 2006.
- Charmaz, Kathy. *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 2nd ed. London: SAGE Publication, 2014.
- Chödrön, Pema. *How to Meditate: A Practical Guide to Making Friends with Your Mind*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 2013.

- Clarke, Stephen. "Kalamitra: A Buddhist Approach to Pastoral Counseling." In *Understanding Pastoral Counseling*, edited by Elizabeth A. Maynard and Jill L. Snodgrass, 275-289. New York: Springer, 2015.
- Clinebell, Howard and Bridget Clare McKeever. *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 3rd Edition. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2011.
- Clooney, Francis X. "Introduction." In *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights from the Next Generation*, edited by Francis X. Clooney, ix-xx. New York: T&T Clark International 2010.
- Coash, Carlyle. "Finding Acceptance at the Heart of Things." In *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, edited by Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller, 253-264. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- Colins, Charlotte, "Report on the Sakyadhita USA One-Day Conference," *Sakyadhita USA*, <http://sakyadhitaua.org/conference.html>
- Collett, Merrill. *At Home with Dying: A Zen Hospice Approach*. Boston: Shambhala, 1999.
- Collins, Steve. "Kalyāṇamitta and Kalyāṇamittatā." *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XI (1987): 51-72.
- "Conference on Buddhism and Race in America," *Harvard College*, <https://college.harvard.edu/college-events/conference-buddhism-and-race-america>
- Corbin, Juliet M. and Anselm L. Strauss. *Unending Work and Care: Managing Chronic Illness at Home*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988.
- Coward, Anne Bruce. "Welcoming an Old Friend: Buddhist Perspectives on Good Death." In *Religious Understandings of a Good Death in Hospice Palliative Care*, edited by Harold G. and Kelli I. Stajduhar. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2012.
- Deleo, Kristin. "Being a Compassionate Presence: The Contemplative Approach to End-of-Life Care." In *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, edited by Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller, 243-252. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion" (SN 56.11). Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*. Last modified November 30, 2013. <http://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.than.html>
- Dingemans, Gijsbert D. J. "Practical Theology in the Academy: A Contemporary Overview." *The Journal of Religion* 76 (1996): 82-96.
- Doehring, Carrie. *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.

- Ellison, Koshin Paley. "The Jeweled Net: What Dogen and the Avatamsaka Sutra Can Offer Us as Spiritual Caregivers." In *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, edited by Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller, 93-104. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- Elsass, Peter, and Kalsang Phuntsok. "Tibetans' Coping Mechanisms Following Torture: An Interview Study of Tibetan Torture Survivors' Use of Coping Mechanisms and How These Were Supported by Western Counseling." *Traumatology* 15, no. 1 (2009): 3-10.
- Epstein, Mark. *Going on Being: Life at the Crossroads of Buddhism and Psychotherapy*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2008.
- . *Thoughts without a Thinker: Psychotherapy from a Buddhist Perspective*. New York: Basic Books, 2013.
- Fagerhaugh, Shizuko Y., and Anselm L. Strauss. *Politics of Pain Management: Staff-Patient Interaction*. Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley, 1977.
- Faure, Bernard. *Double Exposure: Cutting Across Buddhist and Western Discourses*. Translated by Janet Lloyd. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004.
- . *Unmasking Buddhism*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
- Fisher, Danny. *Benefit Beings! The Buddhist Guide to Professional Chaplaincy*. San Bernardino, CA: Off the Cushion Books, 2013.
- . "Three Yanas for Wise Caring: A Buddhist Perspective on Spiritual Care." In *Multifaith Views in Spiritual Care*, edited by Daniel S. Schipani, 44-64. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2013.
- Florida, Robert and Pinit Ratanakul. "Buddhist Hospice Care in Thailand." In *Religious Understandings of a Good Death in Hospice Palliative Care*, edited by Harold G. and Kelli I. Stajduhar, 167-189. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2012.
- Franklin, Cynthia, and Rowena Fong. *The Church Leader's Counseling Resource Book: A Guide to Mental Health and Social Problems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Fraser, Andy. *The Healing Power of Meditation: Leading Experts on Buddhism, Psychology, and Medicine Explore the Health Benefits of Contemplative Practice*. Boston: Shambhala, 2013.
- Fredericks, James L. *Buddhists and Christians: Through Comparative Theology to Solidarity*. New York: Orbis Books, 2004.
- . *Faith among Faiths: Christian Theology and Non-Christian Religions*. New York: Paulist Press, 1999.

- . "Introduction." In *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights from the Next Generation*, edited by Francis X Clooney, ix-xviii. London: T & T Clark, 2010.
- Fronsdale, Gil. "Not-Knowing." *Insight Meditation Center*. February 10, 2004.
<http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/books-articles/articles/not-knowing/>
- Gansevoort, R. Ruard. "Forks in the Road When Tracing the Sacred: Practical Theology as Hermeneutics of Lived Religion." International Academy of Practical Theology, 2009 Presidential Address, accessed March 20, 2015, 3,
http://www.ruardganzevoort.nl/pdf/2009_Presidential.pdf
- Giles, Cheryl A. "Beyond the Color Line: Cultivating Fearlessness in Contemplative Care." In *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, edited by Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller, 46-52. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- . and Willa Miller, eds. *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices in Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. 1967. Reprint, New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Publishing, 1999.
- Glassman, Bernie. *Infinite Circle: Teaching in Zen*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publishing, 2003.
- . and Rick Fields. *Instructions to the Cook: A Zen Master's Lessons in Living a Life that Matters*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publishing, 2013.
- Gleig, Ann. "From Buddhist Hippies to Buddhist Geeks: The Emergence of Buddhist Postmodernism?" *The Journal of Global Buddhism* 15 (2014): 15-33.
- Gordon, James S., Leslie Blackhall, Madeline Ko-I Bastis, and Robert A. F. Thurman. "Asian Spiritual Traditions and Their Usefulness to Practitioners and Patients Facing Life and Death." *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 8, no. 5 (2002): 603-608.
- Gotama Buddha. *Vibhanga: The Book of Analysis*. Translated by U. Thittila. Rangoon, Burma: Pali Text Society, 1969. <http://tipitaka.wikia.com/wiki/Vibhanga-Scanned-Chap.16>
- . *Vibhanga: The Book of Analysis, Pali*. Rangoon, Burma: Pali Text Society, 1969.
http://tipitaka.wikia.com/wiki/Vibhanga,_Pali
- Graham, Elaine L., Heather Walton, and Frances Ward. *Theological Reflection: Methods*. London: SCM Press, 2005.
- Groome, Thomas. *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1998.

- Gross, Rita. "The International Buddhist-Christian Theological Encounter: Twenty Years of Dialogue." *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 25 (2005): 3-7.
- Gunaratana, Henepola. *Mindfulness in Plain English*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2011.
- Gyatso, Geshe Kelsang. *Understanding the Mind: Lorig, the Nature and Power of the Mind*. Ulverston, UK: Tharpa Publications, 2007.
- Haidt, Jonathan. *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*. New York: Basic Books, 2006.
- Halifax, Joan. *Being with Dying: Cultivating Compassion and Fearlessness in the Presence of Death*. Boston: Shambhala, 2008.
- . "Compassion Silence in the Patient-Clinician Encounter: A Contemplative Approach." *Journal of Palliative Medicine* 12, no. 12 (2009): 1113-1117.
- . "G.R.A.C.E. for Nurses: Cultivating Compassion in Nurse/Patient Interactions." *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice* 4, no. 1 (2014): 121-128.
- Han, Chenxing. "Young Adult Asian American Identities." In *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, edited by Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher, 277-287. Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016.
- Hanh, Thich Nhat and Mai Vo-Dinh. *The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual on Meditation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1987.
- Hart, Kusumavarsa. "A Buddhist Mother's Reflections on Spiritual and Religious Care." In *Multifaith Care for Sick and Dying Children and Their Families: A Multi-Disciplinary Guide*, edited by Paul Nash, Madeleine Parkes, and Zamir Hussain, 175-185. London: Jessica Kingsley, 2015.
- Hickey, Wakoh Shannon. "Meditation is Not Enough." In *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, edited by Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller, 17-26. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- . "Two Buddhisms, Three Buddhisms, and Racism." *The Journal of Global Buddhism* 11, no. 1 (2010): 1-25.
- Hirsch, Trudi Jinpu. "The Four Noble Truths as a Framework for Spiritual Care." In *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, edited by Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller, 55-62. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- His Holiness The Dalai Lama. *A Flash of Lightning in the Dark of Night: A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1992.

- and Jeffrey Hopkins. *Heart of Meditation: Discovering Innermost Awareness*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 2017.
- Holland, Joe, and Peter Henriot. *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983.
- Hsu, Fannie. "Lineage of Resistance: When Asian American Buddhists Confronted White Supremacy." *Buddhist Peace Fellowship*, May 8, 2017.
<http://www.buddhistpeacefellowship.org/lineage-of-resistance/>
- . "We've Been Here All Along." *Lion's Roar*, May 17, 2017.
<https://www.lionsroar.com/weve-been-here-all-along/>
- Huang, Julia C. "Buddhism and Its Trust Networks between Taiwan, Malaysia, and the United States." *The Eastern Buddhist* 44, no. 2 (2013): 59-76.
- Hui, Edwin C. and Danny C. Leung. "Chinese Religions and Hospice Care." In *Religious Understandings of a Good Death in Hospice Palliative Care*, edited by Harold G. and Kelli I. Stajduhar, 145-165. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2012.
- Ikeda, Mushim. "Understanding Our Own Power and Privilege." In *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, edited by Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher, 43-48. Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016.
- Inada, Kenneth K. and Nolan Pliny Jacobson. *Buddhism and American Thinkers*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984.
- Iwamura, Jane Naomi. *Virtual Orientalism: Asian Religions and American Popular Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Jensen, Lin. "Wrong Speech: Knowing When It's Best to Lie." In *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, edited by Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller, 291-300. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- Kabat-Zinn, Jon. *Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness*. New York: Hyperion, 2005.
- "Kalama Sutta: The Buddha's Charter of Free Inquiry." Translated by Soma Thera. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*. Last modified November 30, 2013.
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/soma/wheel008.html>
- "Kalama Sutta: To the Kalamas" (AN 3.65). Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*. Last modified November 30, 2013.
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an03/an03.065.than.html>
- "Khandha Sutta: Aggregates" (SN 22.48). Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*. Last modified November 30, 2013.
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn22/sn22.048.than.html>

- Kidd, Robert A. "Foundational Listening and Responding Skills." In *Professional Spiritual & Pastoral Care: A Practical Clergy and Chaplain's Handbook*, edited by Stephen B. Roberts. Woodstock, 92-105. VT: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2012.
- Killen, Patricia O'Connell, and John de Beer. *The Art of Theological Reflection*. New York: Crossroad, 1995.
- Kilts, Thomas. "A Vajrayana Buddhist Perspective on Ministry Training." *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 62, no. 3, (Fall 2008): 273-281.
- King, Patricia M., and Karen S. Kitchener. *Developing Reflective Judgment: Understanding and Promoting Intellectual Growth and Critical Thinking in Adolescents and Adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994
- Kinst, Daijaku Judith. "Cultivating an Appropriate Response: Educational Foundations for Buddhist Chaplains and Pastoral Care Providers." In *The Arts of Contemplative Care*, edited by Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller, 9-16. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- Klotz, Myriam. "Wresting Blessings: A Pastoral Response to Suffering." In *Jewish Pastoral Care: A Practical Handbook from Traditional & Contemporary Sources*, 2nd Edition, edited by Dayle A. Freidman, 4-22. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2013.
- Gluckhohn, Clyde, and Henry A. Murray, eds. *Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture*. 2nd ed. New York: Knopf, 1953.
- Knitter, Paul F. "Toward a Liberation Theology of Religions." In *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, edited by John Hick and Paul F. Knitter, 178-200. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987.
- Kornfield, Jack. *The Wise Heart: A Guide to the Universal Teachings of Buddhist Psychology*. New York: Bantam Books, 2008.
- Kramer, Betty J. "Buddhist Perspectives on End-of-Life Care." In *Living with Grief: Spirituality and End-Of-Life Care*, edited by Kenneth J. Doka and Amy S. Tucci. Washington, DC: Hospice Foundation of America, 2011.
- Kujawa-Holbrook, Sheryl and Karen Montagno, eds. *Injustice and the Care of Souls: Taking Oppression Seriously in Pastoral Care*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.
- Kvale, Steinar, and Svend Brinkmann. *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: SAGE Publications, 2015.
- Lai, Whalen and Michael Von Brück. *Christianity and Buddhism: A Multi-Cultural History of Their Dialogue*. New York: Orbis Books, 2001.
- Lartey, Emmanuel Yartekwei. *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*. London: Jessica Kingsley, 2003.

- . "Pastoral Theology." In *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*, edited by Ian A. McFarland et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), https://dtl.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/cupdct/pastoral_theology/0?institutionId=8909
- Ledoux, Arthur O. "The Healing Touch of Awareness: A Buddhist Perspective on Death, Dying, and Pastoral Care." In *Making Sense of Death: Spiritual, Pastoral, and Personal Spects of Death, Dying, and Bereavement*, edited by Gerry R. Cox, Robert Bendiksen, and Robert G. Stevenson, 101-109. Amityville, NY: Baywood, 2003.
- Lee, Aaron. *Angry Asian Buddhist*. Blog. <http://www.angryasianbuddhist.com/>
- Liew, Jew Chong. "The *Sarvāstivāda* Doctrine of the Path of Spiritual Progress: A Study Based Primarily on the *Abhidharma-Mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*, the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* and Their Chinese and Sanskrit Commentaries." PhD diss., University of Hong Kong, 2009.
- Levine, Noah. *Refuge Recovery: A Buddhist Path to Recovering from Addiction*. San Francisco: HarperOne, 2014.
- Levine, Peter. *Living without Philosophy: On Narrative, Rhetoric, and Morality*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998. Quoted in Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann. *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: SAGE Publications, 2015.
- Loncke, Katie. "Race." In *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, edited by Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher, 335-340. Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016.
- Lopez, Donald S., Jr. *Buddhist Hermeneutics*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988.
- Ludwig, Theodore M. "Buddhist Traditions." In *Spiritual Care in Nursing Practice*, edited by Kristen L. Mauk and Nola A. Schmidt, 151-164. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams, & Wilkins, 2004.
- . "East Asian Traditions." In *Spiritual Care in Nursing Practice*, edited by Kristen L. Mauk and Nola A. Schmidt, 165-188. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams, & Wilkins, 2004.
- . "South Asian Traditions." In *Spiritual Care in Nursing Practice*, edited by Kristen L. Mauk and Nola A. Schmidt, 131-150. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams, & Wilkins, 2004.
- "Maha-Parinibbana Sutta: Last Days of the Buddha" (DN 16). Translated by Sister Vajira and Francis Story. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*. Last modified November 30, 2013. <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html>.
- Makransky, John. "Contemporary Academic Buddhist Theology: Its Emergence and Rationale." In *Buddhist Theology: Critical Reflections by Contemporary Buddhist Scholars*, edited by Roger Jackson and John Makransky, 14-24. London: Routledge, 2000.

- Masuzawa, Tomoko. *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- McGrath, Pam. "Buddhist Spirituality: A Compassionate Perspective on Hospice Care." *Mortality* 3, no. 3 (1998): 251-263.
- McMahan, David L. *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Michon, Nathan Jishin. "Interfaith Considerations." In *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, edited by Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher, 359-362. Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016.
- and Daniel Clarkson Fisher, eds. *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook to Caring for Your Buddhist Community*. Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016.
- Miller, Jean Baker, and Irene Peirce Stiver. *The Healing Connection: How Women Form Relationships in Therapy and in Life*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1997.
- Miller, Willa B. "Like an Elephant Pricked by a Thorn: Buddhist Meditation Instructions as a Door to Deep Listening." *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 35 (2015): 15-20.
- . "Listening as Spiritual Care." In *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook to Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, edited by Nathan Jishon Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher, 25-30. Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016.
- . "Thus I Have Listened: A Reflection on Listening as Spiritual Care." In *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, edited by Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller, 284-290. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- Miller-McLemore, Bonnie. "Practical Theology." In *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*, Vol. 3, edited by Charles Lippy and Peter Williams, 1741-2. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2010.
- Mind and Life Institute, <https://www.mindandlife.org/>
- Mipham, Sakyong. *Ruling Your World: Ancient Strategies for Modern Life*. New York: Morgan Road Books, 2005.
- . *Running with the Mind of Meditation: Lessons for Training Body and Mind*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2012.
- Mitchell, Scott. "'Christianity is for Rubes; Buddhism is for Actors': U.S. Media Representations of Buddhism in the Wake of the Tiger Woods' Scandal." *The Journal of Global Buddhism* 13 (2012): 61-79.

- Monnett, Mikel. "Developing a Buddhist Approach to Pastoral Care: A Peacemaker's View." In *Injustice and the Care of Souls: Taking Oppression Seriously in Pastoral Care*, edited by Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook and Karen Brown Montagno, 125-131. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.
- . LinkedIn Profile, accessed September 29, 2017, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/chap-mikel-ryuho-monnett-bcc-cdca-77103711/>
- Munnings, Keith and Madeleine Parkes. "Care of a Buddhist Child and their Family." In *Multifaith Care for Sick and Dying Children and Their Families: A Multi-Disciplinary Guide*, edited by Paul Nash, Madeleine Parkes, and Zamir Hussain, 32-54. London: Jessica Kingsley, 2015.
- Myers, Neely, Sara Lewis, and Mary Ann Dutton. "Open Mind, Open Heart: An Anthropological Study of the Therapeutics of Meditation Practice in the US." *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry: An International Journal of Cross-Cultural Health Research* 39, no. 3 (2015): 487-504.
- Nicholson, Huch. "The New Comparative Theology and the Problem of Theological Hegemonism." In *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights from the Next Generation*, edited by Francis X. Clooney, 43-62. New York: T&T Clark International, 2010.
- Olendzki, Andrew. *Unlimiting Mind: The Radically Experiential Psychology of Buddhism*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2010.
- Osmer, Richard Robert. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2011.
- Osto, Douglas. "'Proto-Tantric' Elements in the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*." *Journal of Religious History* 33, no. 2 (June 2009): 165-177.
- Pagis, Michal. "Evoking Equanimity: Silent Interaction Rituals in Vipassana Meditation Retreats." *Qualitative Sociology* 38, no. 1 (2015): 39-56.
- Palapathwala, Ruwan. "Bodhi, Karuna, and Metta: Buddhist Perspectives for a Theology of Pastoral Care for the Ageing and Persons with Disabilities." In *Ageing, Disability, and Spirituality: Addressing the Challenge of Disability in Later Life*, edited by Elizabeth MacKinlay, 145-162. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2008.
- Park, Jerry Z., and Elaine Howard Ecklund. "Negotiating Continuity: Family and Religious Socialization for Second-Generation Asian Americans." *Sociological Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2007): 93-118.
- Payne, Richard. "Why 'Buddhist Theology' is Not a Good Idea: Keynote Address for the Fifteenth Biennial Conference of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies, Kyoto, August 2011." *The Pure Land* 27 (2012-2013): 37-72.

- Pew Research Center, "Belief in God," *Religious Landscape Study*, 2017.
<http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/belief-in-god/>
- Power, Mark. "Buddhist Chaplaincy in a Christian Context." In *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, edited by Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller, 63-72. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- Rainbeau, Eric. *Basic Sobriety: Shambhala Buddhism and the Twelve Steps*. Tampa, FL: Empedrado Street Press, 2016.
- Rapgay, Lobsang. "A Buddhist Approach to End-of-Life Care." In *A Time for Listening and Caring: Spirituality and the Care of the Chronically Ill and Dying*, edited by Christina M. Puchalski, 131-138. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Ray, Reginald A. "How to Study the Dharma." *Lion's Roar*, May 1, 2004.
<https://www.lionsroar.com/how-to-study-the-dharma/>
- , comp. *The Tibetan Buddhism Reader*. Boston: Shambhala, 2011.
- Reardon, Patrick T. "Burnham Quote: Well, It May Be." *Chicago Tribune*. January 1, 1992.
http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-01-01/news/9201010041_1_sentences-chicago-architects.
- Roy, Pabitrakumar. *Mapping the Bodhicaryāvatāra: Essays on Mahāyāna Ethics*. Shimla, India: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2011.
- Ruhl, Steve Kanji. "Report from the Field: Being an American Zen Buddhist Minister." In *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices of Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, edited by Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller, 301-308. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- Saldaña, Johnny. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 3rd ed. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2016.
- "Sambodhi Sutta: Self-Awakening" (AN 9.1). Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*. Last updated November 30, 2013.
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an09/an09.001.than.html>
- Sanford, Monica. "Buddhist Practical Theology." In *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, edited by Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher, 55-63. Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016.
- . "Buddhist Practical Theology? A Literature Review."
https://www.academia.edu/7204753/Buddhist_Practical_Theology_A_Literature_Review
- . "Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist Spiritual Care, Counseling, and Assessment." Claremont, CA: Claremont School of Theology, 2017. [Unpublished qualifying exam.]

- . "Is All Care Spiritual? Viewpoints of Buddhist Chaplains and Chaplaincy Students." Unpublished presentation. December 4, 2013. https://www.academia.edu/7204811/Is_All_Care_Spiritual_Viewpoints_of_Buddhist_Chaplains_and_Chaplaincy_Students
- . "Sutra on Reflection in Spiritual Care." October 28, 2017. [Composed for this dissertation]
- Śāntideva, and Cecil Bendall. *Çikshāsamuccaya: A Compendium of Buddhistic Teaching*. Osnabrück, W. Germany: Biblio Verlag, 1970.
- Śāntideva, and Charles Goodman. *The Training Anthology of Śāntideva: A Translation of the Śikṣā-samuccaya*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Sasaki, Hiroshi and Kin Cheung (George) Lee. "Acculturation." In *A Thousand Hands: A Guidebook for Caring for Your Buddhist Community*, edited by Nathan Jishin Michon and Daniel Clarkson Fisher, 271-276. Richmond Hill, ON: Sumeru Press, 2016.
- Schipani, Daniel S. *Multifaith Views in Spiritual Care, 1st Ed.* Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2013.
- Schmidt-Leukel, Perry. *Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Theology: The Gifford Lectures—An Extended Edition*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017.
- Śhāntideva. *The Way of the Bodhisattva*. Translated by the Padmakara Translation Group. Boston: Shambala Publications, 2006.
- Siegel, Daniel J. *Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation*. New York: Bantam Books, 2010.
- "Sigalovada Sutta: The Discourse to Sigala" (DN 31). Translated by Narada Thera. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*. Last updated November 30, 2013. <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.31.0.nara.html>.
- Simmer-Brown, Judith. "Christian Views: A Response." *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 17 (1997): 152-158.
- . "'Listening Dangerously': Dialogue Training as Contemplative Pedagogy." *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 33 (2013): 33-40.
- Smart, Ninian. *Buddhism and Christianity: Rivals and Allies*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993.
- Smith-Penniman, Adele. "Buddhist Resources in Pastoral Care." D.Min. Dissertation, Andover Newton Theological School, 2006.
- Snodgrass, Judith. "Japan's Contribution to Modern Global Buddhism: The World's Parliament of Religions Revisited." *The Eastern Buddhist* 43, no. 1-2 (2012): 81-102.

- . "Pastoral Counseling: A Discipline of Unity amid Diversity." In *Understanding Pastoral Counseling*, edited by Elizabeth A. Maynard and Jill L. Snodgrass, 1-16. New York: Springer, 2015.
- "Sona Sutta: About Sona" (AN 6.55). Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight (Legacy Edition)*. Last modified November 30, 2013. <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an06/an06.055.than.html>
- Steup, Matthias. "Epistemology." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2017 Edition, edited by Edward N. Zalta. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/epistemology>
- Stratton, Jon. *Critical Thinking for College Students*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.
- Suen, Stephen. "Methods of Spiritual Praxis in the *Sarvāstivāda*: A Study Primarily Based on the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā*." PhD diss, University of Hong Kong, 2009.
- Tachikawa, Musashi. *Essays in Buddhist Theology*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2012.
- Taye, Jamgon Kongtru Lodro. *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Seven and Book Eight, Parts One and Two, Fundamentals of Buddhist Study and Practice*. Translated by Richard Barron. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 2013.
- Taylor, James. "Hospitality as Translation." In *Hosting the Stranger Between Religions*, edited by Richard Kearney and James Taylor, 11-22. New York: Continuum, 2011.
- Tracy, David. "Comparative Theology." In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 14, edited by Mircea Eliade, 446-455. New York: Macmillan, 1987.
- . "The Foundations of Practical Theology." In *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church, and World*, edited by Don S. Browning, 61-82. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983.
- Trinlae, Bhikshuni Lozang. "Is South Asia's Buddhist Leader the Gyalwang Drukpa an Ecofeminist? Dialectical, Grounded Analysis of Eminent Feminist Theology Illuminates the Foundations for a Vajrayana Buddhist Ecofeminism." *International Journal of Dharma Studies* 3, no. 1 (2015): 1-14.
- . *Kun-mkhyen Pad-ma dKar-po's Amitayus Tradition of Vajrayana Buddhism: Contemplative Text, Phenomenological Experience, and Epistemological Process*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Vajra Books, forthcoming.
- . "Leveraging Inter-religious Dialogue into Transformative Action Using Practical Theology's Reflexive Frameworks." *Journal of Interreligious Studies* 11 (2013): 51-60.

---. "Prospects for a Buddhist Practical Theology." *International Journal of Practical Theology* 18, no. 1 (2014): 7-22.

"Upaddha Sutta: Half (of the Holy Life)" (SN 45.2). Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*. Last modified November 30, 2013.
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn45/sn45.002.than.html>

Walshe, Maurice O'C. *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 1995.

Watts, Jonathan S., and Yoshiharu Tomatsu. *Buddhist Care for the Dying and Bereaved*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.

Welwood, John. *Toward a Psychology of Awakening: Buddhism, Psychotherapy, and the Path of Personal and Spiritual Transformation*. Boston: Shambhala, 2000.

Whitehead, James D. and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead. *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry*. Franklin, WI: Sheed & Ward, 1995.

Zaker, Christina. "Theological Reflection in the Parabolic Mode." D.Min. diss. Catholic Theological Union at Chicago, 2012.

Appendices

Appendix A: Code List & Descriptions

All Codes as of Pass 3 (including Pass 2 codes and Pass 1 Thematic Codes, but not In Vivo codes, which were discarded)

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Upatthana		2	
Confidentiality	sensitive information	6	Actions w/Careseekers Values
Disclosure	outing' oneself as a Buddhist to careseekers, others, especially in areas where that is unusual or unacceptable	3	Actions w/Careseekers Values
7x7 Assessment		1	Actions w/Careseekers Values Professional Terms
Retreat		12	Actions w/Self Miscellaneous
Negative Feeling	sad, grief, afraid	30	Actions w/Self Negative Emotions
Self-Care	also, resilience	8	Actions w/Self Values
Heart-Centered		4	Actions w/Self Values
Therapy [for chaplain]		3	Actions w/Self Values
Koan		2	Actions w/Self Values Dharma
Discomfort		6	Emotions

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Curiosity		4	Emotions
Vulnerable	Is this the same as being open?	4	Emotions
Grief		3	Emotions
Confusion		11	Emotions Feedback
Confidence		10	Emotions Feedback
Encouragement		11	Feedback
Pragmatic Advice		4	Feedback
Asking Why		2	Feedback
Advice on What to Say		1	Feedback
Education		59	Miscellaneous
NOT		58	Miscellaneous
Training	CPE, other workshops or training programs	47	Miscellaneous
Background		28	Miscellaneous
Medical Model	outcome-oriented assessment-intervention-outcome model medicalized language	8	Miscellaneous
Buddhist Careseeker		2	Miscellaneous
Situations		1	Miscellaneous
Anxious	nervous	31	Negative Emotions
Minimized/Misunderstood		12	Negative Feedback
Sharing	presenting, revealing, checking in, brining to group can be informal or formal	54	Processes
Chaplain Seeking for Self	drawing out, discovering, asking, looking, seeing needs, questioning, exploring, accessing, getting information, searching, extracting, hearing (aspect of 3 prajnas)	33	Processes

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Chaplain Invites Seeking	drawing out, discovering, asking, looking, seeing needs, questioning, exploring, accessing, getting information, searching, extracting, hearing (aspect of 3 prajnas)	15	Processes
Chaplain Questioning Caregiving	drawing out, discovering, asking, looking, seeing needs, questioning, exploring, accessing, getting information, searching, extracting, hearing (aspect of 3 prajnas)	14	Processes
Other Inviting Chaplain to Seek	drawing out, discovering, asking, looking, seeing needs, questioning, exploring, accessing, getting information, searching, extracting, hearing (aspect of 3 prajnas)	12	Processes
Chaplain Meta-Seeking	drawing out, discovering, asking, looking, seeing needs, questioning, exploring, accessing, getting information, searching, extracting, hearing (aspect of 3 prajnas)	8	Processes
Expressing	articulating	6	Processes
CS is Seeking	drawing out, discovering, asking, looking, seeing needs, questioning, exploring, accessing, getting information, searching, extracting, hearing (aspect of 3 prajnas)	4	Processes
Representing	Representing Buddhism or eastern traditions, especially as only Buddhist	4	Processes
Taking Responsibility	appologizing, accountable, owning one's actions	4	Processes
Intellectualizing	being in my head, theory, academic vs. felt, experienced, present, heart, emotional	2	Processes
Attending Services		1	Processes
Blessing		1	Processes
Giving Money		1	Processes
Holding Services		1	Processes

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Mediating Conflict		1	Processes
Singing		1	Processes
Careseeker Sharing		0	Processes
Talking	communicating, engaging, discussing, responding, conversing, interacting "having generative conversations" connecting?	40	Processes Actions w/Careseekers
Broadening	to make wider or more inclusive	30	Processes Actions w/Careseekers
Praying	offering prayer to others	23	Processes Actions w/Careseekers
Accompanying	Companioning, being with, following Related to the idea of the spiritual friend vs. saving, rescuing	11	Processes Actions w/Careseekers
Progressing		11	Processes Actions w/Careseekers
Facilitating	existential questions, big questions, exploring questions of meaning, spiritual distress, etc., with/for careseekers helping someone else to process or make meaning	8	Processes Actions w/Careseekers
Reframing		7	Processes Actions w/Careseekers
Being Accepted by CS	willing to interact, welcomed	6	Processes Actions w/Careseekers
Doing It Right	Reflecting correctly	5	Processes Actions w/Careseekers

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Being Surprised	suprised, shocked, unexpected	4	Processes Actions w/Careseekers
Touching	physical touch	2	Processes Actions w/Careseekers
Transference CS		1	Processes Actions w/Careseekers
Counseling		0	Processes Actions w/Careseekers
Watching the Mind	observing self, concentrating, watching the self, being cognizant of self, looking at the mind seeing blind spots, seeing missing, seeing biases ? thinking	59	Processes Actions w/Careseekers Actions w/Self
Chanting		9	Processes Actions w/Careseekers Actions w/Self
Judging		9	Processes Actions w/Careseekers Actions w/Self
Analyzing	comparing	4	Processes Actions w/Careseekers Actions w/Self

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Challenging	pushing, accessing things one didn't want to	29	Processes Actions w/Careseekers Actions w/Self Aspect of Reflection Feedback
Failing	failing to help someone, not working, making an error, doing wrong, screwing up careseekers failing to live up to expectations, making mistakes, behaving unethically, trying to take advantage of the chaplain	15	Processes Actions w/Careseekers Actions w/Self Negative
Storytelling	telling a story, and story-listening, listening to careseeker's tell stories, facilitating storytelling	11	Processes Actions w/Careseekers Aspect of Reflection
Overwhelming	to be caught up in one's emotions	8	Processes Actions w/Careseekers Emotions
Supporting	expressing understanding, encouraging, helping, benefiting, holding, understanding, impacting (positively), healing (metaphorically) vs. impacting [negatively]	44	Processes Actions w/Careseekers Feedback
Assessing	spiritual assessment of careseeker self-assessment of inner states	8	Processes Actions w/Careseekers Feedback

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Guiding	presenting options, planting seeds, pushing vs. directing, prescribing, instructing abivalent: intervening, reaching	4	Processes Actions w/Careseekers Feedback
Being Rejected by CS		12	Processes Actions w/Careseekers Negative
Feeling Fake	feeling insufficient, not enough, not good enough	3	Processes Actions w/Careseekers Negative
Reflecting		83	Processes Actions w/Self
Maturing	Broadening, developing, deepening understanding Is this part of learning? Or is it a result of cumulative learning?	21	Processes Actions w/Self
Fabricating	Being discursive, mind-wandering, [false] meaning-making, conflating, missing, misunderstanding, triggering, worrying, conceptual thinking, making into something Negative quality Interferes with being present and with insight	19	Processes Actions w/Self
Reading		18	Processes Actions w/Self
Transference Chaplain		9	Processes Actions w/Self
Pausing	stop, look, hold, take a moment	8	Processes Actions w/Self

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Writing	journalling	33	Processes Actions w/Self Aspect of Reflection
Recollecting	remembering, thinking back, recalling	10	Processes Actions w/Self Aspect of Reflection
Processing	working through, dealing, something "cooking," contemplating (aspect of 3 prajnas), integrating, interfacing (two ideas, experiences, etc.) either by oneself or with others or through writing or meditating	20	Processes Actions w/Self Aspect of Reflection Feedback
Meditating	aspect of 3 prajnas or more mundane meaning	91	Processes Actions w/Self Dharma
Practicing	cultivating	72	Processes Actions w/Self Dharma Feedback
Interpreting	Positive and negative connotations Negatively associated with discursiveness, delusion, misunderstanding, and false meaning making Positively associated with understanding and insight, making sense of something for self or others Also has to do with constructing a belief structure, lenses through which to see the world identifying? or is that part of observing	39	Processes Actions w/Self Feedback

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Learning	seeing unskillfulness, seeing error, critically reflecting, doubting and overcoming, penetrating [insight], processing, not knowing & knowing, changing, confirming, corroborating, training, using experience, shifting approach, adapting, realizing vs. not changing does this include maturing?	39	Processes Actions w/Self Feedback
Avoiding	resisting careseeker or chaplain could be avoiding	9	Processes Actions w/Self Negative
Meeting	getting together specifically with peers, supervisor, interdisciplinary team, sangha, etc. Not with careseekers	1	Processes Aspect of Reflection
Getting Feedback	from careseekers, peers, supervisor, team members	29	Processes Aspect of Reflection Feedback
Believing Delusions	delusions of chaplain and careseeker's believing their own delusions vs. seeing clearly, insight	4	Processes Buddhist Psychology Negative
Struggling	doubting, not knowing [negative way], fighting, grappling, hard, also reluctance, hesitation, wrestling	34	Processes Emotions
Feeling Better		1	Processes Emotions
Using [a Person]	appropriating, infiltrating	0	Processes Negative

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Suffering (verb)		37	Processes Negative Emotions
Missing	not seeing, not noticing, not observing correctly, not understanding something not present that should be present	8	Processes Negative Feedback
Listening		28	Processes Quality of Presence Actions w/Careseekers
Empathizing	relating	17	Processes Quality of Presence Actions w/Careseekers
Observing	seeing, noticing, taking in, paying attention, glimpsing includes observing self (internally and in reference to actions, words, facial expressions, body language) and others (in reference to situations, contexts, words, deeds, body language, facial expressions) identifying? or is that part of interpreting	17	Processes Quality of Presence Actions w/Careseekers

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Being Present	Just being present, embodying, paying attention, centering, breathing, holding one's motivation, ministry of presence, returning, showing up, pastoral presence Related to all Qualities of Presence Mentioned a lot but described very little Could be a value (presence) or a process (being present) Present for self and others (careseekers)	50	Processes Quality of Presence Actions w/Careseekers Actions w/Self
Connecting	usually connecting chaplain with careseeker, connecting with people sometime connection to the sacred, ethier chaplain's connection or careseeker's connection sometimes connecting with self spiritual relationship? is connecting the same as having or coming into or being in relationship?	48	Processes Quality of Presence Actions w/Careseekers Actions w/Self
Experiencing		44	Processes Quality of Presence Actions w/Careseekers Actions w/Self
Letting Go	surrendering, dettached vs. attachment, clinging	25	Processes Quality of Presence Actions w/Careseekers Actions w/Self

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Removing Self		5	Processes Quality of Presence Actions w/Careseekers Actions w/Self Dharma
Accepting	accepting, allowing, approaching, diving in, attending, encountering, attuning, showing up, meeting, dealing, facing, turning toward, no agenda, containing vs. not facing, turning away, 'fixing' Quality of Presence Related to: observing, accompanying	18	Processes Quality of Presence Actions w/Careseekers Dharma
Responding	reacting to careseeker to feedback from others	6	Processes Quality of Presence Actions w/Careseekers Feedback
Concentrating	focusing, settling, clarifying	4	Processes Quality of Presence Actions w/Self
Not Knowing	sensitive, cautious, ethical, responsible, accountable, humble, skeptical of lies or one-sided stories told by careseekers, skeptical of one's own thinking Related to: mindful	22	Quality of Presence Actions w/Careseekers Actions w/Self Values Dharma

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Openness	open, openness, openminded, willing, open-hearted	29	Quality of Presence Actions w/Careseekers Values
Silence	as a tool	12	Quality of Presence Actions w/Careseekers Values
Intentional		18	Quality of Presence Values
Equanimity	neurtal compassion, staying calm, dealing with emotions, unbiassed, without prejudice, treating equally or fairly	16	Quality of Presence Values Dharma
Bodhisattva	can be related to a quality of presence, or the power of vows, or a motivating impulse	8	Quality of Presence Values Dharma
Compassion	appologizing Related to impact, especially when negative Related to feedback and seeing oneself and one's impact, reflexivity	40	Quality of Presence Values Dharma Emotions
Calm	confidence, calm vs. anxious, agitated, distracted Related: seeing multiple good ways, no one right way, variety of ways	14	Quality of Presence Values Emotions

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Authenticity	real me, grounded, identity, spiritual identity, genuine, sincerity	22	Quality of Presence Values Feedback
Sharing Reflection & Feedback		99	Thematic Codes
Theory of Buddhist Care		51	Thematic Codes
Process of Learning Reflection		49	Thematic Codes
Meditation and Reflection		41	Thematic Codes
Sources		40	Thematic Codes
Written Reflection		36	Thematic Codes
Change in Care due to Reflection		34	Thematic Codes
Recurrent Ideas in Reflection		30	Thematic Codes
Understanding 'Theological'		30	Thematic Codes
Relationship to Experience		28	Thematic Codes
Purpose of Reflection		20	Thematic Codes
Formal vs. Informal Reflection		16	Thematic Codes
Soteriological Goals		16	Thematic Codes
Teacher	mentor, guide, lama, guru, supervisor, buddha	47	Values
God/Divinity		34	Values
Intensity	"Real meat" "alive" "grist" "juice" "heavy" powerful, deep	28	Values
Teamwork		21	Values

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Moral/Ethical		16	Values
Identity	self-image, self-worth	14	Values
Skillful	skillful means, upaya, right [magga], useful	11	Values
Working with People Directly		11	Values
Truth	reality, real	10	Values
Privilege	racial, gender, economic privilege	8	Values
Sense of Purpose	existential, why am I here, purpose in life	8	Values
Boundaries		7	Values
Buddhist Peers		7	Values
Integrity	includes honesty, authenticity, true to self, and sense of diligence, discipline, effort, doing the hard, uncomfortable work	7	Values
Social Justice		7	Values
Spiritual Distress	meaninglessness, hopelessness, fearfulness	7	Values
Vows		7	Values
Forgiveness		5	Values
Complexity	context, specifically	3	Values
Faith		3	Values
Mystic Experience		3	Values
Symbols	metaphors, symbolism, meaning	3	Values
Afterlife		1	Values
Nature		1	Values
Spiritual Friendship		1	Values
Community	spiritual community	0	Values

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Structure	format	11	Values Aspect of Reflection
Action-Reflection Model		6	Values Aspect of Reflection Professional Terms
Dharma Knowledge		44	Values Dharma
Sangha	community	34	Values Dharma
Insight	seeing things as they are, wisdom, seeing reality, realizing, realization	25	Values Dharma
Emptiness & Interdependence	interdependence, dependent arising, 'all is one, one is all'	21	Values Dharma
Liberation	Enlightenment, nirvana, freedom from suffering	5	Values Dharma
Balance		3	Values Dharma
5 Precepts		2	Values Dharma
3 Prajnas	Hearing, contemplating, & meditating related to the process of learning the Dharma and putting it into practice	1	Values Dharma
Buddha-nature		1	Values Dharma
Impermanence		1	Values Dharma

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Non-Conceptual	wordless	14	Values Dharma Buddhist Psychology
3 Poisons		8	Values Dharma Buddhist Psychology
4 Noble Truths		5	Values Dharma Buddhist Psychology
8-Fold Path		2	Values Dharma Buddhist Psychology
Samsara/Hell	realm of suffering, place where beings suffer literal, metaphorical, or psychological	2	Values Dharma Negative
Joy	Enjoyment	22	Values Emotions
Love	Loving-kindness, or kindness Also Christian and theistic connotations of love	21	Values Emotions
Ease	Coming naturally	15	Values Emotions
Gratitude		9	Values Emotions
Peace	sense of peace, peacefulness	7	Values Emotions

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Trust		5	Values Emotions
Hope	wanting to recover, wanting a miracle, even when not possible/likely	4	Values Emotions
Humor	existential questions, spiritual crisis, careseekers asking hard questions	2	Values Emotions
Inter-Religious		105	Values Feedback
Many Right Ways	different ways, different approaches, seeing things from another perspective, other's perspectives	16	Values Feedback
Clarity	or clarifying, clearly, seeing clearly	14	Values Feedback
Theist Perspective		12	Values Feedback
Inclusiveness	Being included Not being left out Related to: broadening	3	Values Feedback
Job	employment, professional position	4	Values Miscellaneous
Isolation	Broken connections, misunderstood/standing, loneliness, distance, alone, only	19	Values Negative
Alone		1	Values Negative
Selfish	self-serving	1	Values Negative
Suffering (noun)		37	Values Negative Emotions

Code	Comment	Count	Code Groups
Blind Spot		0	Values Negative Feedback

All Reflection Codes

Code	Count	Code Groups
Communication Barrier w/CS	2	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Ability to Comprehend	1	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS as Caregiver	10	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Aversion to Suffering	8	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Awareness	7	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Conflict w/Medical Team	3	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Curiosity	1	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Identity	9	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Locked in Role	1	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Loss of Agency	14	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Making Medical Decisions	2	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Neglects Health	1	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Processing Emotions	4	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Questioning	4	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Reacts to 'Buddhist' Chaplain	1	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Reflects	1	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Requests Chaplain	6	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Resists Change	2	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Sharing	19	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Stays in Contact	1	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Struggles w/Theodicy	2	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS's Motivation	2	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS's Sense of Purpose	6	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS's Spiritual Community	3	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS's Spiritual Crisis	8	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS's Spiritual Hope	11	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS's Spiritual Practice	7	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
Important to CS	4	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
Not Talking about Religion/Spirituality	1	Careseeker Actions & Concerns
CS Accepts Situation	4	Careseeker Actions & Concerns Outcomes

Code	Count	Code Groups
CS Cannot Accept/Let Go	5	Careseeker Actions & Concerns Outcomes
CS Changes Perspective/Behavior	9	Careseeker Actions & Concerns Outcomes
CS Finds New Meaning	2	Careseeker Actions & Concerns Outcomes
CS Forgives	1	Careseeker Actions & Concerns Outcomes
CS Relates to God	1	Careseeker Actions & Concerns Outcomes
CS Response Not As Expected by Chaplain	3	Careseeker Actions & Concerns Outcomes
CS Seeks Forgiveness	1	Careseeker Actions & Concerns Outcomes
Chaplain Assessment	36	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Being Present	10	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Censors Self	2	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Challenges CS's Behavior	1	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Concerned for Effects	1	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Consults	10	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Contemplates	27	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Correlates	2	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Diffuses Conflict	4	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Empathizes	4	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Focusses Discussion	1	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Following CS's Lead	1	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Helps Processing	7	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Identifies Sacred	2	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Inquires	1	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Interprets Tradition	11	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Invites	3	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain is Reflexive	8	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Listens	6	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Not Fixing	7	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Not-Knowing	5	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Observes	6	Chaplain Actions

Code	Count	Code Groups
Chaplain Prays	6	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Processes	2	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Questioning	5	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Raises Ethical Concerns	13	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Refers	1	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Respects other Traditions	5	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Shares Reflection	1	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Suggests	6	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Supports	13	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain Writes Reflection	1	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain's Hope for Patient	5	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain's Insecurities	3	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain's Positive Regard	7	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain's Spiritual Goal	3	Chaplain Actions
Chaplain's Stress	2	Chaplain Actions
Guiding Meditation for CS	1	Chaplain Actions
Going on Retreat	4	Chaplain Actions
		Careseeker Actions & Concerns
Meditation	8	Chaplain Actions
		Careseeker Actions & Concerns
Bodhicitta	4	Dharma Concepts
Bodhisattva	13	Dharma Concepts
Brahmaviharas & Paramitas	4	Dharma Concepts
Buddha-nature	6	Dharma Concepts
Buddhist 3 Prajna Model	1	Dharma Concepts
Causation	30	Dharma Concepts
Clinging	10	Dharma Concepts
Collective Karma	7	Dharma Concepts
Eightfold Path	1	Dharma Concepts
Emptiness	4	Dharma Concepts
Five Aggregates	2	Dharma Concepts
Five Remembrances	1	Dharma Concepts
Four Noble Truths	1	Dharma Concepts
Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind	1	Dharma Concepts
Impermanence	28	Dharma Concepts
Interdependence	7	Dharma Concepts
Karma	8	Dharma Concepts
Letting Go	8	Dharma Concepts
Mind	6	Dharma Concepts

Code	Count	Code Groups
Non-self	4	Dharma Concepts
Precepts	5	Dharma Concepts
Samsara	1	Dharma Concepts
Sangha	2	Dharma Concepts
Seeing Reality	3	Dharma Concepts
Self-Clinging	3	Dharma Concepts
Skillfulness	10	Dharma Concepts
Spiritual Friendship	1	Dharma Concepts
Three Poisons	1	Dharma Concepts
Truth of Suffering	10	Dharma Concepts
Twelve Links	1	Dharma Concepts
Two Truths	2	Dharma Concepts
Two Wings	2	Dharma Concepts
Vows	1	Dharma Concepts
Wisdom	10	Dharma Concepts
Enlightenment	2	Dharma Concepts Outcomes
Liberation from Suffering	16	Dharma Concepts Outcomes
Nirvana	1	Dharma Concepts Outcomes
Miracle	20	Dharma Concepts Outcomes Theistic Concepts
Compassion	26	Dharma Concepts Positive Emotions & Values
Equanimity	6	Dharma Concepts Positive Emotions & Values
Mindfulness	10	Dharma Concepts Positive Emotions & Values
Abuse	4	Factors & Situations
Aging	5	Factors & Situations
Alcohol & Drugs	14	Factors & Situations
Asian-American	1	Factors & Situations
Brain Injury	1	Factors & Situations

Code	Count	Code Groups
Cancer	2	Factors & Situations
Cannot Live At Home	2	Factors & Situations
Cause of Suffering	14	Factors & Situations
Chronic Condition	7	Factors & Situations
Commonality w/CS	7	Factors & Situations
CS has Kids	9	Factors & Situations
CS is Another Chaplain	2	Factors & Situations
CS is Staff	3	Factors & Situations
Difficult Family Life	1	Factors & Situations
Disability	1	Factors & Situations
Drunk Driving Accident	1	Factors & Situations
End-of-Life	38	Factors & Situations
Existential Crisis	3	Factors & Situations
Family Conflict	10	Factors & Situations
Family Neglect	5	Factors & Situations
Gang Affiliation	1	Factors & Situations
Heart Condition	1	Factors & Situations
Incarceration	1	Factors & Situations
Interfaith Care	1	Factors & Situations
Lack of Family	1	Factors & Situations
Making Someone Change	1	Factors & Situations
Medical Team Communication	4	Factors & Situations
Mental Health Diagnosis	10	Factors & Situations
Military Service	4	Factors & Situations
Miscommunication	1	Factors & Situations
Morbid Humor	2	Factors & Situations
Moving	3	Factors & Situations
Multiple Visits w/CS	4	Factors & Situations
Peer Group/Pressure	3	Factors & Situations
Poor Coping/Resources	2	Factors & Situations
Poverty	1	Factors & Situations
Proper Procedures	3	Factors & Situations
Relationship Ending	5	Factors & Situations
Retirement	3	Factors & Situations
Risky Behavior	6	Factors & Situations
Situational Stress	1	Factors & Situations
Social Status	1	Factors & Situations
Staff Aversion to Suffering	2	Factors & Situations
Staff Neglect	4	Factors & Situations
Stroke	1	Factors & Situations

Code	Count	Code Groups
Suicide	7	Factors & Situations
Support Group	2	Factors & Situations
Surgery	2	Factors & Situations
Trauma	6	Factors & Situations
Young Adult	6	Factors & Situations
Family support	16	Factors & Situations Outcomes
Anger	9	Negative Emotions & Values
Anxiety	4	Negative Emotions & Values
Confusion	1	Negative Emotions & Values
Emotional Distance	3	Negative Emotions & Values
Fear	2	Negative Emotions & Values
Feeling Tired	1	Negative Emotions & Values
Frustration	3	Negative Emotions & Values
Grief & Loss	23	Negative Emotions & Values
Guilt	4	Negative Emotions & Values
Hopelessness	8	Negative Emotions & Values
Intellectualizing	1	Negative Emotions & Values
Loneliness	7	Negative Emotions & Values
Sadness	2	Negative Emotions & Values
Ignorance	1	Negative Emotions & Values Dharma Concepts
Failure	1	Negative Emotions & Values Outcomes
Death	12	Outcomes
Life Saved/Saving	4	Outcomes
Positive Response	8	Outcomes
Secondary Trauma to Family	1	Outcomes
Acceptance	5	Outcomes Positive Emotions & Values
Emotional Awareness	7	Outcomes Positive Emotions & Values
Peace/Calm/Ease	3	Outcomes Positive Emotions & Values
God's Will	1	Outcomes Theistic Concepts

Code	Count	Code Groups
Accompaniment	2	Positive Emotions & Values
Authenticity	1	Positive Emotions & Values
Awe	1	Positive Emotions & Values
Boundaries	3	Positive Emotions & Values
Comforting	1	Positive Emotions & Values
Confidentiality	1	Positive Emotions & Values
Dignity	3	Positive Emotions & Values
Empathy	1	Positive Emotions & Values
Forgiveness	2	Positive Emotions & Values
Generosity	1	Positive Emotions & Values
Gratitude	4	Positive Emotions & Values
Happiness	4	Positive Emotions & Values
Humility	1	Positive Emotions & Values
Love	11	Positive Emotions & Values
Need for Contact	4	Positive Emotions & Values
Normalize/Humanize	6	Positive Emotions & Values
Relief	2	Positive Emotions & Values
Role Model	1	Positive Emotions & Values
Trust	11	Positive Emotions & Values
Action-Reflection Model	1	Sources of Knowledge
Buddhist Peers/Colleagues	2	Sources of Knowledge
Buddhist Teachers	11	Sources of Knowledge
Buddhist Training	1	Sources of Knowledge
Chaplain's Direct Experience	6	Sources of Knowledge
Chaplain's Spiritual/Mystic Experience	4	Sources of Knowledge
Contemporary Books	6	Sources of Knowledge
Dharma Talks & Meditation Instruction	6	Sources of Knowledge
Formal Education	5	Sources of Knowledge
Internet Research	1	Sources of Knowledge
Liturgy, Chants, & Prayers	3	Sources of Knowledge
Modern Concern/Not in Texts	1	Sources of Knowledge
Multiple Perspectives	5	Sources of Knowledge
Previous Experience w/CS	16	Sources of Knowledge
Sacred Texts	22	Sources of Knowledge
Study	3	Sources of Knowledge
Teammates/Colleagues	24	Sources of Knowledge
Tradition Guiding	41	Sources of Knowledge
Western Psychology	3	Sources of Knowledge
Chaplain's Spiritual Practice	21	Sources of Knowledge
		Chaplain Actions

Code	Count	Code Groups
Diety	1	Theistic Concepts
God	10	Theistic Concepts
God's Grace & Love	2	Theistic Concepts
Jesus	4	Theistic Concepts
Devotion	1	Theistic Concepts Positive Emotions & Values
Faithfulness	5	Theistic Concepts Positive Emotions & Values
Buddhist CS	3	Types of Careseekers
Christian CS	5	Types of Careseekers
Jewish CS	1	Types of Careseekers
Nonreligious CS	4	Types of Careseekers

All Theoretical Codes, Definitions, & Keywords

Codes & Keywords

Stage	Listening	Contemplating	Practicing
1	At least one of Read or reading books, magazines, blogs about Dharma, spirituality or religion; Hear, heard, hearing, or listening to Dharma talks, podcasts; AND Doing so unprompted, on one's own, from one's own motivation, one's own spiritual seeking	At least one of Thinking about what one has read or heard; trying to make sense of it Considering what is happening in the context of what one has read or heard AND Considering these issues on one's own OR ONLY Learning to meditate, chant, or occasionally participating in ritual, possibly through training programs BUT prior to entering a formal teacher-student relationship	At least one of Integrating a consistent meditation and/or ritual practice into one's life Implementing the Noble Eightfold Path in one's life Understanding the Four Noble Truths and acting on them
2	At least one of Following a course of study including listening and/or reading as specified by a program or person	At least one of Completing assignments as part of a formal course of study that require personal reflection on what one has	At least one of Strong, community supported practice, including retreats, chanting, and rituals

	Following (listening to them and reading them) a particular teacher as part of a formal teacher-student relationship Sharing one's thoughts, feelings, experiences, and insights with a teacher, mentor, guide, or spiritual friend who listens and enables one to listen to oneself BUT Prior to one's practice of chaplaincy as part of a CPE program	learned and the integration of knowledge Practicing guided reflection with a teacher, mentor, guide, or spiritual friend who asks questions, helps one focus on topics, see one's biases, and enables deeper contemplation than would be possible alone, etc.	Implementation of right relationships with the three refuges (Buddha, Dharma, or Sangha) in one's life
3	At least one of Listening to careseekers during spiritual care encounters Listening to oneself during spiritual care encounters Listening to one's CPE supervisor and peers during sharing Listening to didactics during CPE Reading assignments during CPE BUT Primarily during the early learning phase of one's training for the sake of learning to provide care while simultaneously providing care	At least one of Sharing about one's encounters with careseekers and getting feedback from one's supervisor, peers, and/or interdisciplinary teammates Thinking about one's encounters, trying to make sense of them Meditating on one's work to facilitate emotional processing and/or insight	At least one of Furthering one's own learning process by seeking out feedback Integrating feedback into future actions Integrating what one has learned into future actions (i.e. changing one's care) Practicing appropriate self-care, such as meditating for stress relief and seeking peer group support
4	At least one of Listening to careseekers during spiritual care encounters Eliciting from careseekers their own spiritual, religious, or existential knowledge Reflecting careseeker's own wisdom back to them	At least one of Asking questions to help careseekers go deeper in their own reflection Reframing concerns that help careseekers get to the heart of the matter Framing ethical issues	EITHER Assessing how the careseeker's spiritual, religious, or existential worldview is affecting them (and others) in the present situation Assessing if the careseeker's values or goals are aligned with their

	AND Primarily to enable the careseeker to 'listen' to themselves and find their own wisdom and/or the wisdom of their existing traditions and worldviews		behaviors and decisions, especially using scientific theory OR (OR BOTH) Implementing appropriate interventions for at least one of the following Alleviate suffering or stress, even momentarily Maintain or improve coping Cathartic ventilation Processing emotions Wrestling with questions, coming to a decision, or making a choice Improve emotional state Improve positive outlook, if possible Talk through meaning-making based on experience Mediate conflict THROUGH (Intervention) Conversation, storytelling, or life review Prayer, chanting, meditation, or ritual Comforting presence Mediation between family members Mediation with medical staff Referral
--	--	--	--

Coding pass 4 used a combination of Reflection Codes and Theoretical Codes.

Information Sheet for Research Study Participants

THE PRACTICE OF DHARMA REFLECTION AMONG BUDDHIST CHAPLAINS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF 'THEOLOGICAL' ACTIVITY AMONG NON-THEOCENTRIC SPIRITUAL CAREGIVERS

Primary Investigator: Rev. Monica Sanford, PhD candidate, (monica.sanford@cst.edu)

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Duane Bidwell, Claremont School of Theology (dbidwell@cst.edu)

Purpose

The purpose of this research study is to examine how Buddhist chaplains and chaplain interns practice **reflection** in relation to spiritual care to answer the following questions:

5. What 'theological' methods or processes are used by Buddhist chaplains and chaplain interns when reflecting on the Dharma in relation to their practice of spiritual care? How are these methods/processes similar to or distinct from methods of theological reflection employed by Christian and other theocentric chaplains?
6. What sources of Dharma are used or privileged during the process of reflection? (i.e. sutras/suttas, books, teachers/teachings, and other sources beyond direct experience)
7. What is the relationship between one's own experience as a chaplain or chaplain intern and one's understanding of the Dharma and how is it articulated?
8. How does the practice of reflection on the Dharma and their own experience change their practice of spiritual care? In other words, what interventions do Buddhist chaplains and chaplain interns develop as a result of their reflective practices and what effects do they have?

This study will result in an interpretive description of how Buddhist chaplains currently practice reflection, along with implications for further education and training for Buddhist chaplains and for how Buddhist chaplains interact with non-Buddhist CPE supervisors and fellow spiritual caregivers.

Eligibility

You are eligible to participate in this study if:

1. You are Buddhist, belong to a Buddhist order or lineage, OR identify as multi-religious including Buddhist
2. You are enrolled in or have completed an MDiv degree at University of the West, Naropa University, the Institute of Buddhist Studies, Harvard Divinity School, OR Claremont School of Theology
3. You have completed OR are currently enrolled in a CPE program during the study period (May-Aug 2017)

Your Participation

Total time to participate in the study will be between three and five hours over three months. The study will consist of a demographic questionnaire, at least one interview either in person or via an online video conference lasting no more than 90 minutes, and submission of a written reflection sample of one to three pages in length. A follow up interview of no more than 60 minutes in length may be requested

to clarify statements in the original interview or written reflection sample. All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. You will not be paid. You will receive a copy of the final results. **All data collected from participants will remain confidential and will be anonymized in final reports.**

Contact

Please contact Rev. Monica Sanford (monica.sanford@cst.edu or 626-688-3180) if you would like to participate. **You must return a signed Informed Consent before participation can begin.**

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

You are invited to participate in a PhD dissertation research study, entitled “The Practice of Dharma Reflection among Buddhist Chaplains: A Qualitative Study of ‘Theological’ Activity among Non-Theocentric Spiritual Caregivers.” The study is being conducted by Rev. Monica Sanford under the supervision of Dr. Duane Bidwell of Claremont School of Theology, 1325 N. College Ave, Claremont, CA 91711, dbidwell@cst.edu, (909) 447-2528.

The purpose of this research study is to examine how Buddhist chaplains and chaplain interns practice what is commonly called ‘theological’ reflection in relation to spiritual care. Your participation will contribute to a better understanding of the methods of reflection used by Buddhist chaplains and chaplain interns and the sources of Dharma used or privileged during the practice of reflection by Buddhist chaplains and chaplain interns. You are free to contact the investigator using the information below to discuss the study.

Rev. Monica Sanford, 1325 North College Avenue, Claremont, CA 91711
(626) 688-3180, monica.sanford@cst.edu

You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

If you agree to participate:

- The study will consist of a demographic questionnaire, at least one interview either in person or via an online video conference lasting no more than 90 minutes, and submission of a written reflection sample of one to three pages in length. A follow up interview of no more than 60 minutes in length may be requested to clarify statements in the original interview or written reflection sample. Total time to participate in the study will be between three and five hours over two months.
- Your participation is intended to illuminate the role that reflection on the Dharma/Dhamma plays in your practice as a Buddhist chaplain or chaplain intern, including what reflection methods you employ (consciously or unconsciously) and what sources you draw from. You may gain a better understanding of your own spiritual care practice as a result. Results of this research study will be shared with all participants via an emailed PDF by May 31, 2018.
- Your participation will consist in
 - Complete and return a demographic questionnaire
 - Participate in an interview with Rev. Sanford either in person or online for no more than 90 minutes; this interview will be audio recorded and transcribed
 - Submit a written reflection sample, 1-3 pages long, based on an actual encounter with a careseeker/client/patient following the template of section five of a theological verbatim, using the following writing prompts:
 - What is the key spiritual, religious, or existential issue, content, connection, or assumption that you identified in this encounter?

- What is your understanding and experience of that issue in relation to the Dharma/Dhamma? (If there is a relation.)
 - Where did you learn about this issue, aside from your own experience? (Please describe sources, such as books, sutras/suttas, teachers or teachings, etc.)
 - Is there a theme or pattern connecting this issue is to other spiritual care experiences?
 - NOTE: It is very important that you DO NOT include any identifiable information about the careseeker/client/patient in this reflection. Names, dates, places, and other identifiable details should be changed or removed.
- Participate in a follow up interview at Rev. Sanford's request for no more than 60 minutes; this interview will be audio recorded and transcribed
- You will not be compensated.

Risks, Benefits, & Confidentiality

There are some possible risks or discomfort which could cause you to feel negative emotions such as discomfort, embarrassment, sadness, or anger. Risks include secondary trauma, if the interviews or written reflection cause you to recall an intense interaction with a careseeker/client/patient who experienced trauma. You may pause or end your participation in the study at any time if these feelings become too strong. The principle investigator will provide referral to counseling or mental health services upon request. There will be no costs for participating.

Limits to confidentiality include information that falls under the legal requirement of mandated reporting and imminent danger of suicide or harm to others. The principle investigator is a mandated reporter. Confidentiality does not apply to reports of abuse or neglect of a child or dependent adult. If the principle investigator has reasonable suspicion that a child or dependent adult is being abused or neglected, this will be reported to child protective services. If the principle investigator has a reasonable suspicion that the participant in the study is an imminent danger to him/herself or others, this will be reported to police.

Your name, email address and other personally identifiable information will be kept during the data collection phase. No personally identifiable information will be publicly released. Your personal information will be used solely for tracking purposes. A limited number of research team members will have access to the data during data collection. Those research team members are: Rev. Monica Sanford and Dr. Duane Bidwell. A transcriptionist may be hired to convert audio files into transcripts. This person will not have access to your personal identity information and will sign a non-disclosure agreement.

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. Audio recordings will only be used for transcription and then destroyed. Your personal information will be stored until December 31, 2020, and then destroyed. Interview transcripts and your written reflection will be stored indefinitely in order to facilitate further research on this topic, but personal information identifying the source (you) of these data will be removed.

Participation or Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question and you have the right to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal will not affect your relationship with Claremont School of Theology in any way. If you do not want to participate, you may simply stop participating.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the study or need to update your email address, contact the primary investigator Rev. Monica Sanford at (626) 688-3180 or send an email to monica.sanford@cst.edu. This study has been reviewed by Claremont School of Theology Institutional Review Board and the study number is 2017-18.

Questions about Your Rights

If you have questions about your rights or are dissatisfied at any time with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, the chair of the Institutional Review Board by phone at (909) 447-6344 or email at irb@cst.edu.

Thank you.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I have read the information provided above. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant (Printed)

Signature of Participant

Date

Address

Phone

Email

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

My signature as witness certifies that the participant signed this consent form in my presence as his/her voluntary act and deed.

Name of Witness (Printed)

Signature of Witness

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

Signature of Investigator

Date (same as participant's)

A signed copy of this document will be supplied for your records.

Appendix C: Data Collection & Analysis Timeline

Data Type	Collection Date	Question Set	Coding Pass(es)
Interview	6/1	Interview Questions 1	1: 6/7-20, 2: 7/15-27, 3: 7/28-8/20, 4: 10/14-20
Interview	6/2	Interview Questions 1	1: 6/7-20, 2: 7/15-27, 3: 7/28-8/20, 4: 10/14-20
Interview	6/6	Interview Questions 1	1: 6/7-20, 2: 7/15-27, 3: 7/28-8/20, 4: 10/14-20
Interview	6/22	Interview Questions 2	2: 7/15-27, 3: 7/28-8/20, 4: 10/14-20
Interview	6/28	Interview Questions 2	2: 7/15-27, 3: 7/28-8/20, 4: 10/14-20
Interview	6/29	Interview Questions 2	2: 7/15-27, 3: 7/28-8/20, 4: 10/14-20
Interview	7/6	Interview Questions 3	2: 7/15-27, 3: 7/28-8/20, 4: 10/14-20
Interview	7/7	Interview Questions 3	2: 7/15-27, 3: 7/28-8/20, 4: 10/14-20
Interview	7/15	Interview Questions 3	2: 7/15-27, 3: 7/28-8/20, 4: 10/14-20
Interview	7/20	Interview Questions 3	2: 7/15-27, 3: 7/28-8/20, 4: 10/14-20
Interview	7/27	Interview Questions 3	2: 7/15-27, 3: 7/28-8/20, 4: 10/14-20
Interview	8/10	Interview Questions 3	3: 7/28-8/20, 4: 10/14-20
Interview	8/15	Interview Questions 3	3: 7/28-8/20, 4: 10/14-20
Reflection	6/17	Reflection Questions	R: 9/12-20, 4: 10/14-20
Reflection	6/22	Reflection Questions	R: 9/12-20, 4: 10/14-20
Reflection	7/6	Reflection Questions	R: 9/12-20, 4: 10/14-20
Reflection	7/19	Reflection Questions	R: 9/12-20, 4: 10/14-20
Reflection	7/24	Reflection Questions	R: 9/12-20, 4: 10/14-20
Reflection	7/31	Reflection Questions	R: 9/12-20, 4: 10/14-20
Reflection	8/7	Reflection Questions	R: 9/12-20, 4: 10/14-20
Reflection	8/12	Reflection Questions	R: 9/12-20, 4: 10/14-20
Reflection	9/3	Reflection Questions	R: 9/12-20, 4: 10/14-20
Reflection	9/10	Reflection Questions	R: 9/12-20, 4: 10/14-20
Follow-up Interview	10/5	Follow-Up Interview Questions 1A	4: 10/14-20
Follow-up Interview	10/5	Follow-Up Interview Questions 1A	4: 10/14-20
Follow-up Interview	10/5	Follow-Up Interview Questions 1A	4: 10/14-20
Follow-up Interview	10/11	Follow-Up Interview Questions 1B	4: 10/14-20
Follow-up Interview	10/12	Follow-Up Interview Questions 1B	4: 10/14-20

Appendix D: Interview & Follow-Up Interview Questions

Interview Question Set 1

- I. **Background:** To start, can you tell me how you became a chaplain?
 - a. Can you tell me a little about your background as a Buddhist?
 - b. How do you see Buddhism as related (or not) to your work as a chaplain?
- II. **Encounter:** Can you tell me about an encounter you had with a careseeker or patient that really stuck with you and that you found yourself thinking about for a while?
 - a. About the encounter itself
 - i. How did you come to meet that person/people?
 - ii. What happened during the encounter?
 - iii. What did they say and what did you say?
 - iv. What did you think and feel during the encounter?
 - v. What stuck with you about that encounter?
 - b. Reflecting on it later
 - i. How did you reflect on it later?
 - ii. When and where did it come back to you?
 - iii. How did you feel about it when it did?
 - iv. Had your thinking or feeling about it changed?
 - v. Did you do any kind of formal reflection, either written or verbal?
 - vi. What was that process like?
 - c. Sharing reflections
 - i. Did you share your reflection with another person?
 - ii. What prompted you to share?
 - iii. How was your sharing received?
 - iv. What feedback did you receive?
 - v. How did you feel during the sharing?
 - vi. How did it change how you thought or felt about the encounter?
 - d. Meta-reflection
 - i. How did sharing your reflection change the nature of the reflection itself?
(i.e. deepen, broaden, new direction, etc.)
 - ii. How did sharing your reflection change how you reflect on later encounters or how you present or share other reflections?
 - iii. Have you applied anything you learned to subsequent reflections?
 - e. Meaning-making
 - i. What kind of meanings, if any, did you find in that encounter?
 - ii. What does that kind of situation mean to the careseeker?
 - iii. What does that kind of situation mean to you?
 - iv. How do you think they are similar to or different from the meanings the careseeker or patient makes of their situation?
 - v. How do you think about the different meanings you and the careseeker make from that kind of situation?
 - f. Return to encounter

- i. Did you encounter that careseeker(s) or patient again? If so, how did that go?
 - ii. How has this process of reflection and meaning making changed how you interact with careseekers?
 - iii. How has this changed what you do or say as a chaplain?
 - iv. How effective do you find those changes?
- III. **Direct Questions:** How do you understand the role of so-called ‘theological’ reflection or reflection on the Dharma/Dhamma in your work as a chaplain?
 - a. ‘Theological’
 - i. What does the term ‘theological’ reflection mean to you?
 - ii. Where did you first gain an understanding of ‘theological’ reflection?
 - iii. Where did you first practice ‘theological’ reflection?
 - iv. How do you practice ‘theological’ reflection?
 - b. Dharma/Dhamma
 - i. What teaching(s) from the Dharma/Dhamma inspired you to become a chaplain?
 - ii. What teaching(s) do you find most useful in your work as a chaplain?
 - iii. What sources or teachers do you find most strongly related to your work as a chaplain?
 - iv. Are there any books, sutras/suttas, or teachings you return to again and again in your work? If so, what are they, specifically?
 - v. Can you give me an example a teaching from the Dharma/Dhamma or Buddhism that you recently saw or experience in your work as a chaplain?
 - vi. How do you understand that teaching, issue, or aspect?
 - vii. Where did that understanding come from? (Can you cite a specific source or teacher?)
 - c. Meditation
 - i. How does your meditation practice (if any) relate to your practice as a chaplain?
 - ii. What kind of meditation do you practice and how often?
 - iii. Do you teach meditation to careseekers and, if so, what kind and how taught?
 - iv. Have insights or abilities gained in/from meditation affected your chaplaincy and, if so, in what way?
 - 1. How do you understand that?
 - 2. Where does that understanding come from? (Can you cite a specific source or experience?)
 - v. Has your practice of chaplaincy influenced your meditation and, if so, in what way?
 - 1. How do you understand that?
 - 2. Where does that understanding come from? (Can you cite a specific source or experience?)

- vi. Does your practice of meditation help you reflect on the Dharma/Dhamma and/or your chaplaincy and, if so, how?

Interview Question Set 2

- When did you first hear about ‘theological’ reflection and what did you think it was at the time? (Was it something you’d already been doing without knowing the term?)
- When did you first try to do reflection and how did that go?
- Who taught you how to do reflection and what was that like?
- How was ‘theological’ reflection covered in your education? In your coursework and assignments? How was it talked about by your faculty? What did you classmates think?
- How were you introduced to reflection in the CPE process? How did your supervisor explain it? What worked and didn’t work for you? What changed over time? How did your cohort help (or not help) you?
- How comfortable or confident do you feel practicing reflection now? Do you do it spontaneously or only when assigned?
- What kind of resources do you use when practicing reflection, particularly when writing something? What books, articles, sutras, or other kinds of resources do you find yourself looking towards?
- What is your process of reflection like, particularly when written? How, where, and when do you work? How do you start? What do you do next? Do you know what you want to say ahead of time or do you work it out as you go along?
- What kind of ideas, terms, or teachings from the Dharma do you find showing up in your reflections? Which ones pop up repeatedly? Do any of them surprise you? Was there anything you thought you’d see more of but haven’t yet?
- Where does your understanding of those ideas come from? Who taught you about them?
- What do you think the process of reflection is for? What’s its purpose? How is it related to meaning making, if at all? How is related to practice, if at all?
- Do the act of reflecting on your spiritual care change what you do? How has it affected your chaplaincy? Can you give me a specific example?
- How is reflection different for you, as a Buddhist, than for others, such as your CPE supervisor or cohort? How is the content different? How is the process different? Do you make different kinds of meaning out of similar events? How are those meanings different?
- How is your reflection process different now compared to when you first started?

Interview Question Set 3

There are three main parts to this interview. Then, if we have time, I may ask a few additional questions about some details. Please let me know at any time if you’d like to pause, go back, or ask a question.

Background

First, thank you for filling out the demographic questionnaire. I appreciate that. I just have a few questions about your background, but not too much.

To start, can you tell me how you became a chaplain?

Can you tell me a little about your background as a Buddhist?

How do you see Buddhism as related (or not) to your work as a chaplain?

Reflection on Spiritual Practice

I'm going to ask a little bit about how you ...

I'm wondering - when was the first time you were introduced to the idea of practicing reflection in relation to your spiritual or religious life?

What do you remember about when you first began or when you were fairly new at reflecting on your spiritual practice? What was that like?

Reflection on Spiritual Care

Now I'm going to ask a little bit about reflection in relation to your work as a chaplain.

What was it like when you first began to reflect on your practice of spiritual care? How did that go?

Who taught you how to do reflection and what was that like?

How was reflection covered in your education? In your coursework and assignments? How was it talked about by your faculty? What did your classmates think?

How comfortable or confident do you feel practicing reflection now? Do you do it spontaneously or only when assigned?

What kind of resources do you use when practicing reflection, particularly when writing something? What books, articles, sutras, or other kinds of resources do you find yourself looking towards?

What is your process of reflection like, particularly when written? How, where, and when do you work? How do you start? What do you do next? Do you know what you want to say ahead of time or do you work it out as you go along?

What kind of ideas, terms, or teachings from the Dharma do you find showing up in your reflections? Which ones pop up repeatedly? Do any of them surprise you? Was there anything you thought you'd see more of but haven't yet?

Where does your understanding of those ideas come from? Who taught you about them?

What do you think the process of reflection is for? What's its purpose? How is it related to meaning making, if at all? How is related to practice, if at all?

Do the act of reflecting on your spiritual care change what you do? How has it affected your chaplaincy? Can you give me a specific example?

How were you introduced to reflection in the CPE process? How did your supervisor explain it? What worked and didn't work for you? What changed over time? How did your cohort help (or not help) you?

How is reflection different for you, as a Buddhist, than for others, such as your CPE supervisor or cohort? How is the content different? How is the process different? Do you make different kinds of meaning out of similar events? How are those meanings different?

How is your reflection process different now compared to when you first started?

'Theological'

As you know, we they often call this kind of reflection 'theological' reflection. They use that work in the verbatims and in the standards for professional practice, which say a chaplain should be proficient at theological reflection.

What does the term 'theological' mean to you?

How do you understand the role of so-called 'theological' reflection or reflection on the Dharma/Dhamma in your work as a chaplain?

Where did you first gain an understanding of 'theological' reflection?

Where did you first practice 'theological' reflection?

Meditation

How does your meditation practice (if any) relate to your practice as a chaplain?

What kind of meditation do you practice and how often?

Do you teach meditation to careseekers and, if so, what kind and how taught?

Have insights or abilities gained in/from meditation affected your chaplaincy and, if so, in what way? How do you understand that? Where does that understanding come from? (Can you cite a specific source or experience?)

Has your practice of chaplaincy influenced your meditation and, if so, in what way? How do you understand that? Where does that understanding come from? (Can you cite a specific source or experience?)

Does your practice of meditation help you reflect on the Dharma/Dhamma and/or your chaplaincy and, if so, how?

Extras

Is reflection part of your learning process? ...

Some have said...

... no change after reflection

... sharing reflection and feedback from peers

... hesitate to interpret or make meaning

... emphasize observation and critique quick interpretation

... it's an art

If wanted to deepen practice, ever consider becoming a monk/nun? ...

Written Reflection Instructions

Dear Participants,

Please reflect on a recent actual encounter you have had with a patient, client, or careseeker to whom you provided spiritual care in the capacity of the Buddhist Chaplain. Please follow these instructions to complete a **1-3 page reflection** responding to the four questions below. Please email this reflection as a Word or rich text document to the principle investigator at monica.sanford@cst.edu. Please contact the principle investigator at any time should you have questions or concerns.

Patient Privacy NOTE: It is very important that you **DO NOT include any identifiable information about the patient**, client, or careseeker in this reflection. Names, dates, places, and other identifiable details should be changed or removed. Only personal details, i.e. age, gender, diagnosis, that are **immediately relevant** to your reflection should be included. (For example: it may be relevant to know that your patient had attempted suicide if you are reflecting on the ethics of suicide, but it may not be relevant to know their age, gender, ethnicity, etc., unless these significantly affect the content your reflection.) All other personal details should be omitted or anonymized (i.e. changed) to protect the identity of your patient, client, or careseeker.

Your Privacy NOTE: Please **DO NOT put your name** on your reflection. Your reflection will be assigned a reference number at the time it is received by the principle investigator. Thereafter, your email with the attachment will be permanently deleted to preserve your confidentiality and anonymity.

Reflection Questions

Please answer the following questions as your reflect on your spiritual care encounter:

1. What is the key spiritual, religious, or existential issue, content, connection, or assumption that you identified in this encounter?
2. What is your understanding and experience of that issue in relation to the Dharma/Dhamma? (If there is a relation.)
3. Where did you learn about this issue, aside from your own experience? (Please describe sources, such as books, sutras/suttas, teachers or teachings, etc.)
4. Is there a theme or pattern connecting this issue is to other spiritual care experiences?

When you have completed your reflection, please email it to monica.sanford@cst.edu with the subject line "Dharma/Dhamma Reflection." Please return your reflection no later than August 1, 2017, if you wish to be included in this study.

Protections

Your information will be confidential. Your name will not be associated with your reflection when stored. Publications of findings from this study may use excerpts from interviews or written reflections and will anonymize details in order to preserve your privacy.

You may withdraw from this study at any time, including after you have submitted this reflection. If you withdraw, all data collected from you (interviews, written reflections, demographics, etc.) will be destroyed. Your standing with the principle investigator or Claremont School of Theology will not be affected should you withdraw from the study.

Follow-Up Interview Questions 1A

Thank you...Aiming for 60 minutes...Do you have a hard 'out' time? Try to respect.

I'd like to share five hypotheses I've generated from all of the interviews so far and the reflection materials and then ask some questions about them. In this interview, my questions will tend to be less neutral and more 'loaded' because I'm trying to test an understanding that is still under construction. To be clear, these are just hypotheses and I'm interested in what you think of them especially if you disagree or see things a little differently. That would be very helpful to critique my own thinking. We may move through the first three hypotheses fairly quickly, but we also have time to pause for more detail where needed. The fourth and fifth hypotheses are where we run into questions that may be more unique to Buddhist chaplains than others.

Hypothesis 1: *Chaplains who have themselves done their fair share of spiritual seeking and have experienced a sufficient amount of other-initiated reflection (i.e. been prompted by teachers and supervisors to seek) seem to be better able to facilitate reflection/seeking in careseekers through appropriate questioning, accompanying, drawing out, reframing, and responding (sub-codes).*

What do you think of that statement?

In relation to that, I'd like to ask a few questions about 'maturity' in reflection, which came up in several interviews. In describing how you began reflecting and how you reflect on things now, there was a clear arc, a sense of development or maturation that was also common for other subjects, although everyone described it somewhat differently.

- 1) For you, what characterizes mature reflection vs. immature or still developing reflection?
- 2) If you were helping someone else learn how to reflect, what might you expect to see in a novice? (A Buddhist novice? A non-Buddhist novice?) Do you have a real-life example?
- 3) How might you help them mature in their practice of reflection? Do you have an example from your work?

Hypothesis 2: *Chaplains who can form strong connections with careseekers are better able to facilitate 'theological' reflection.*

What do you think of this statement?

In relation to that, I'd like to ask a few questions about this idea of 'connection,' which came up a lot.

- 1) How would you define a sense of connection with a careseeker?
- 2) What factors contribute to a good or strong connection?
- 3) What factors might make it hard to form a good connection?
- 4) What do you do or say when you are with a careseeker to initiate or maintain a good connection?

Hypothesis 3: *The ability of a chaplain to facilitate 'theological' reflection that enables the careseeker to connect with something beyond oneself is predicated on or influenced by that chaplain's experience of a similar connection to something 1) sacred, 2) God or divine, 3) sense of oneness, wholeness, interconnectedness, 4) a sense of meaning or purpose for their own life, or 5) experiences of connecting with other people to whom they look for guidance during reflection.*

What do you think of this statement?

- 1) What is the difference between reflecting for oneself or on one's own experience and 'facilitating' reflection for another person? How do you help someone else reflect on their experience?
- 2) When a careseeker brings up a spiritual or religious topic that is not commonly addressed in the Dharma or that they are clearly thinking of in relation to a theist worldview, such as forgiveness or God's will,
 - a) How do you understand that topic? Where does your insight into that concept, if any, come from?
 - b) How do you facilitate their opportunity for theological reflection? Where does the conversation go?
 - c) How do you assess how the careseeker's understanding is functioning in their lives?
 - d) How do you facilitate an opportunity for the careseeker to mature in their own understanding or process of theological reflection? What might you actually do or say?

Hypothesis 4: *Buddhist chaplains infrequently report a sense of personal connection to God or the divine and frequently report a sense of connection a feeling of oneness, wholeness, interconnectedness, or emptiness, a sense of meaning or purpose for their own life, to other people (very strong), and occasionally to a something sacred. Buddhist chaplains also tend to locate 'authority' in these experiences rather than in revelation of divine purpose and use sacred texts as important guides to experience rather than as authoritative in-and-of themselves.*

What do you think of these statements?

- 1) Do you experience a sense of personal connection with God, gods, or divinity?
- 2) Do you experience a sense of connection to something sacred? If so, how would you characterize it?
- 3) Where do you locate 'authority?' Do you find it in texts, teachers, experiences, or elsewhere?

In relation to experience, I'd like to ask a few questions about two types of experience. Sometimes we differentiate between scholarly study of the Dharma (such as reading and translating, listening to talks, etc.) and contemplative practice of the Dharma (such as meditation, visualization, koans, etc.). I'd like to

ask a few questions about your experience of this and try to relate it to your work as a chaplain, if possible.

- 1) When we study, we try to make sense of things, link or differentiate ideas, remember conceptual categories, understand cause and effect, etc. This requires a kind of analytical attention. Do you find this to be the case in your experience? To what extent?
- 2) Yet, the qualities of presence and attention cultivated in meditation seem to be similar to the qualities of presence that Buddhist chaplains bring when they meet careseekers. Does this match your personal experience? To what extent?
- 3) Also in meditation we sometimes discourage things such as discursiveness or chasing after conceptual thoughts and encourage a kind of stillness or non-conceptual insight? Do you find this in your tradition or practice? To what extent?
- 4) Do you find that because we bring similar qualities of presence to both meditation and to spiritual caregiving, we may also bring similar orientations towards thinking about spiritual caregiving as we do about meditation? Or do you find that the way you think about your meditation practice or to be different from how you think about your interactions with careseekers? Do you bring this more analytical or scholastic frame of mind to your reflection on spiritual care?

Now we've come to the most debatable set of hypotheses. Either:

Hypothesis 5a: *Buddhist chaplains are hindered in their ability to facilitate 'theological' reflection that helps careseekers connect with God or the divine due to a lack of personal experience with this connection.*

OR

Hypothesis 5b: *Buddhist chaplains are not hindered in their ability to facilitate 'theological' reflection that helps careseekers connect with God or the divine due to their ability to connect with something beyond themselves even though they do not conceptualize it as God or the divine (if not hindered).*

What do you think of these hypotheses? Which one do you find to be closer to your own experience?

- 1) Do you find that your experience of also seeking meaning, purpose, and goodness in your life, however understood, helps you connect with careseekers who also seek these things? Even if their worldview and goals are different? In what ways?
- 2) Do you find that your experiences are so different from those of careseekers that sometimes it is hard to relate to what they're going through or connect with them? In what ways?
- 3) What hinders your ability to make connections across religious or spiritual difference?
- 4) What aids your ability to make connections across religious or spiritual difference?
- 5) What hinders your ability to facilitate theological reflection for careseekers?
- 6) What aids your ability to facilitate theological reflection for careseekers?

Some Buddhist chaplains reported that they were able to connect with careseekers in meaningful ways even when they weren't always able to connect with supervisors or peers or explain how they connect with careseekers to the satisfaction of their supervisors and peers.

- 1) Has this ever been the case in your experience? Can you tell me more?
- 2) Have there been cases where supervisors and peers pointed out something important that you genuinely missed in your conversation with the careseeker that you might attribute to your Buddhist worldview? Can you tell me more?

I want to thank you for the time you've taken to spend with me in these interviews and on the written reflection. I have two final questions.

- 1) First, have you learned anything from this entire process that you would like to share? (Either about yourself and your work, in relation to these topics, or in relation to how I've gone about this research?)
- 2) Last, is there anything else you'd like to share with me that I didn't ask about?

Follow-Up Interview Questions 1B

Thank you...Aiming for 60 minutes...Do you have a hard 'out' time? Try to respect.

I'd like to start by asking questions to areas about which I'd like to learn more. In this interview, my questions will tend to be less neutral and more 'loaded' because I'm trying to test an understanding that is still under construction.

Then I'd like to share five hypotheses I've generated from all of the interviews so far and the reflection materials and then ask some questions about them. To be clear, these are just hypotheses and I'm interested in what you think of them especially if you disagree or see things a little differently. That would be very helpful to critique my own thinking.

To start, I'd like to ask a few questions about 'maturity' in reflection, which came up in several interviews. In describing how you began reflecting and how you reflect on things now, there was a clear arc, a sense of development or maturation that was also common for other subjects, although everyone described it somewhat differently.

- 1) For you, what characterizes mature reflection vs. immature or still developing reflection?
- 2) If you were helping someone else learn how to reflect, what might you expect to see in a novice? (A Buddhist novice? A non-Buddhist novice?) Do you have a real-life example?
- 3) How might you help them mature in their practice of reflection? Do you have an example from your work?

Now, I'd like to ask a few questions about this idea of 'connection,' which came up a lot.

- 4) How would you define a sense of connection with a careseeker?
- 5) What factors contribute to a good or strong connection?
- 6) What factors might make it hard to form a good connection?

- 7) What do you do or say when you are with a careseeker to initiate or maintain a good connection?
- 8) What is the difference between reflecting for oneself or on one's own experience and 'facilitating' reflection for another person? How do you help someone else reflect on their experience?
- 9) When a careseeker brings up a spiritual or religious topic that is not commonly addressed in the Dharma or that they are clearly thinking of in relation to a theist worldview, such as forgiveness or God's will,
 - e) How do you understand that topic? Where does your insight into that concept, if any, come from?
 - f) How do you facilitate their opportunity for theological reflection? Where does the conversation go?
 - g) How do you assess how the careseeker's understanding is functioning in their lives?
 - h) How do you facilitate an opportunity for the careseeker to mature in their own understanding or process of theological reflection? What might you actually do or say?
- 10) Do you experience a sense of personal connection with God, gods, or divinity?
- 11) Do you experience a sense of connection to something sacred? If so, how would you characterize it?
- 12) Where do you locate 'authority?' Do you find it in texts, teachers, experiences, or elsewhere?

In relation to experience, I'd like to ask a few questions about two types of experience. Sometimes we differentiate between scholarly study of the Dharma (such as reading and translating, listening to talks, etc.) and contemplative practice of the Dharma (such as meditation, visualization, koans, etc.). I'd like to ask a few questions about your experience of this and try to relate it to your work as a chaplain, if possible.

- 13) When we study, we try to make sense of things, link or differentiate ideas, remember conceptual categories, understand cause and effect, etc. This requires a kind of analytical attention. Do you find this to be the case in your experience? To what extent?
- 14) Yet, the qualities of presence and attention cultivated in meditation seem to be similar to the qualities of presence that Buddhist chaplains bring when they meet careseekers. Does this match your personal experience? To what extent?
- 15) Also in meditation we sometimes discourage things such as discursiveness or chasing after conceptual thoughts and encourage a kind of stillness or non-conceptual insight? Do you find this in your tradition or practice? To what extent?
- 16) Do you find that because we bring similar qualities of presence to both meditation and to spiritual caregiving, we may also bring similar orientations towards thinking about spiritual caregiving as we do about meditation? Or do you find that the way you think about your meditation practice or to be different from how you think about your interactions with careseekers? Do you bring this more analytical or scholastic frame of mind to your reflection on spiritual care?

- 17) Do you find that your experience of also seeking meaning, purpose, and goodness in your life, however understood, helps you connect with careseekers who also seek these things? Even if their worldview and goals are different? In what ways?
- 18) Do you find that your experiences are so different from those of careseekers that sometimes it is hard to relate to what they're going through or connect with them? In what ways?
- 19) What hinders your ability to make connections across religious or spiritual difference?
- 20) What aids your ability to make connections across religious or spiritual difference?
- 21) What hinders your ability to facilitate theological reflection for careseekers?
- 22) What aids your ability to facilitate theological reflection for careseekers?

Some Buddhist chaplains reported that they were able to connect with careseekers in meaningful ways even when they weren't always able to connect with supervisors or peers or explain how they connect with careseekers to the satisfaction of their supervisors and peers.

- a. Has this ever been the case in your experience? Can you tell me more?
- b. Have there been cases where supervisors and peers pointed out something important that you genuinely missed in your conversation with the careseeker that you might attribute to your Buddhist worldview? Can you tell me more?

Now, I'd like to go over the different hypotheses that are related to these questions and get your opinions of them.

Hypothesis 1: *Chaplains who have themselves done their fair share of spiritual seeking and have experienced a sufficient amount of other-initiated reflection (i.e. been prompted by teachers and supervisors to seek) seem to be better able to facilitate reflection/seeking in careseekers through appropriate questioning, accompanying, drawing out, reframing, and responding (sub-codes).*

What do you think of that statement?

Hypothesis 2: *Chaplains who can form strong connections with careseekers are better able to facilitate 'theological' reflection.*

What do you think of this statement?

Hypothesis 3: *The ability of a chaplain to facilitate 'theological' reflection that enables the careseeker to connect with something beyond oneself is predicated on or influenced by that chaplain's experience of a similar connection to something 1) sacred, 2) God or divine, 3) sense of oneness, wholeness, interconnectedness, 4) a sense of meaning or purpose for their own life, or 5) experiences of connecting with other people to whom they look for guidance during reflection.*

What do you think of this statement?

Hypothesis 4: *Buddhist chaplains infrequently report a sense of personal connection to God or the divine and frequently report a sense of connection a feeling of oneness, wholeness, interconnectedness, or emptiness, a sense of meaning or purpose for their own life, to other people (very strong), and*

occasionally to a something sacred. Buddhist chaplains also tend to locate 'authority' in these experiences rather than in revelation of divine purpose and use sacred texts as important guides to experience rather than as authoritative in-and-of themselves.

What do you think of these statements?

Now we've come to the most debatable set of hypotheses. Either:

Hypothesis 5a: *Buddhist chaplains are hindered in their ability to facilitate 'theological' reflection that helps careseekers connect with God or the divine due to a lack of personal experience with this connection.*

OR

Hypothesis 5b: *Buddhist chaplains are not hindered in their ability to facilitate 'theological' reflection that helps careseekers connect with God or the divine due to their ability to connect with something beyond themselves even though they do not conceptualize it as God or the divine (if not hindered).*

What do you think of these hypotheses? Which one do you find to be closer to your own experience?

I want to thank you for the time you've taken to spend with me in these interviews and on the written reflection. I have two final questions.

- 23) First, have you learned anything from this entire process that you would like to share? (Either about yourself and your work, in relation to these topics, or in relation to how I've gone about this research?)
- 24) Last, is there anything else you'd like to share with me that I didn't ask about?

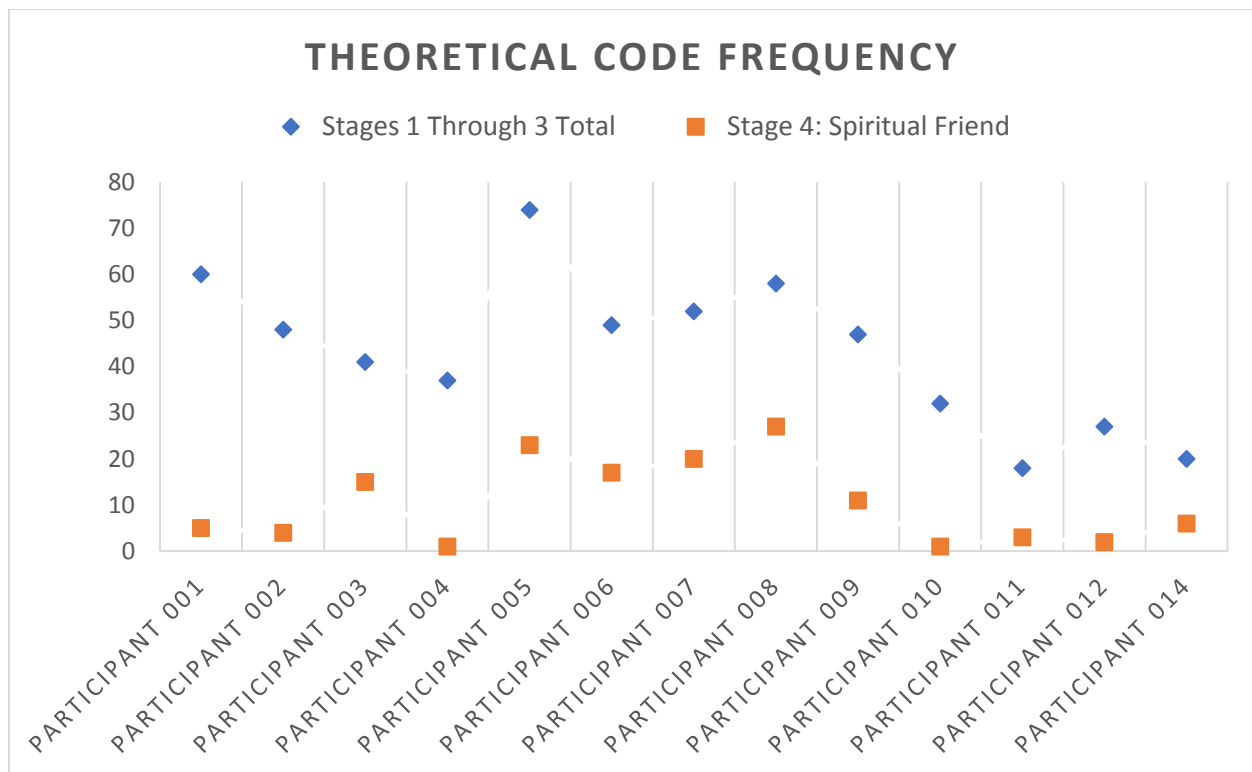
Appendix E: Evidence of Data Saturation & Sufficiency

Code Counts by Participant by Stage

	Stage 1: Self	Stage 2: Student	Stage 3: Chaplain	Stage 4: Spiritual Friend
Participant 001	29	18	13	5
Participant 002	17	4	27	4
Participant 003	9	7	25	15
Participant 004	7	5	25	1
Participant 005	4	13	57	23
Participant 006	1	6	42	17
Participant 007	1	9	42	20
Participant 008	6	18	34	27
Participant 009	3	15	29	11
Participant 010	4	5	23	1
Participant 011	3	5	10	3
Participant 012	8	5	14	2
Participant 014	1	2	17	6

Analysis of Theoretical Categories

	Counts	% of Total	Targeted Questions?	Sufficiency or Saturation?	New Data in Follow-up Interviews?
Stage 1: Listening	32	4.6%	No	Sufficiency	No
Stage 1: Contemplating	49	7.0%	No	Saturation	No
Stage 1: Practicing	12	1.7%	No	Sufficiency	No
Stage 2: Listening	26	3.7%	Yes	Sufficiency	No
Stage 2: Contemplating	49	7.0%	No	Saturation	No
Stage 2: Practicing	37	5.3%	No	Sufficiency	No
Stage 3: Listening	88	12.6%	Yes	Saturation	No
Stage 3: Contemplating	157	22.5%	Yes	Saturation	Very Little
Stage 3: Practicing	113	16.2%	Yes	Saturation	No
Stage 4: Listening	57	8.2%	Yes	Saturation	Some
Stage 4: Contemplating	30	4.3%	Yes	Saturation	Some
Stage 4: Practicing	48	6.9%	Yes	Saturation	Some
Totals	698	100.0%			

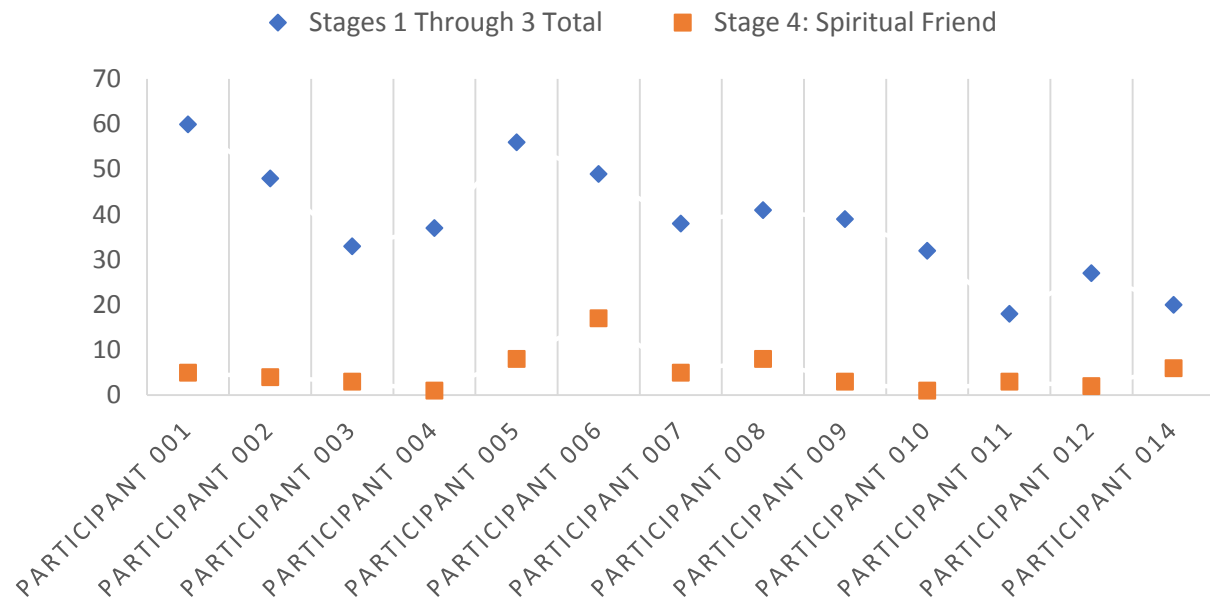


The graph above provides a visual representation. As we can see, in general, when participants demonstrate more experience developing wisdom through listening, contemplating, and practices in stages one, two, and three (as represented by the number of quotations in each participant's data coded as falling into those stages) they are also more likely to show stage 4: spiritual friendship. There are some outliers to this pattern, including participant 003, who demonstrated higher spiritual friendship than might be expected from relatively low occurrence of earlier stages. Higher code counts for this participant, as well as participants 005, 007, 008, and 009 can be attributed to inclusion in follow-up interviews. Some participants, including 001, 002, and 004 showed relatively low stage 4 behaviors, though this can be attributed to their early participation in interviews that did not yet target aspects of spiritual friendship.

When follow-up interviews are excluded, the chart renders as follows, and continues to show the a similar relationship, though participant 003 is no longer an outlier. Instead, participant 005 shows a lower frequency of stage 4 than might be expected. Follow-up interviews with this participant rectified this by clarifying the participant's articulation of stage 4 behaviors.

As we can see from these graphs, the relationship between stages 1-3 and stage 4 is far from proven. The Framework rests largely on the qualitative nature of the data for its validity (i.e., what participants said rather than how often they said it). Further research will be necessary to prove the thesis and clarify the relationships between theoretical categories.

THEORETICAL CODE FREQUENCY - W/O FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS



Appendix F: First Draft Sketch of Three *Prajñās* Theory

